

RAZORCAKE

#33

GREG PALAST
BAD DUDES

CHAOS
IN TEXAS

DAN SARTAIN
TIM VERSION

TOUGH DIARY

PINK RAZORS
THE MORMONS

GORILLA
ANGREB

\$4 US



Somewhere along the way my parents became right again. About a year ago, my parents packed up their house in Maine, let it out for less than my share of rent in my apartment, and moved onto their sailboat. They aren't rich; they made a goal and made sacrifices to meet it. They didn't take vacations. They didn't buy each other Christmas presents. Their TV is older than some of you.

But money wasn't the only obstacle in their way. Broken parts and bad weather are standard fare in longer sailing trips. Their doubts weren't quite so standard.

As a tightly knit family, we'd suffered a pretty severe blow when my twenty-four-year-old cousin was killed last March. My mom didn't want to leave her sister's side, and, now recognizing her own children's mortality, didn't want to leave us. The fall approached, fears were not necessarily put to rest but eased, and they started to prepare for their journey.

But through their preparation to leave, I think we finally began to understand one another. As I realized how long it would be until I ever saw them, and began to deal with the fact that there was a chance that I never would see them again, we began to really talk. I wanted to hear all the stories I'd heard hundreds of times before, but I also discovered stories and facets of their lives that I'd never known. As straight-laced as I thought they were growing up, I now see how similar we really are. The fact that I choose to spend most of my life on something very few hold onto as more than a passing fad is probably due to the fact that I have two parents who have never been afraid to sail uncharted seas. I may have worked to

make Razorcake a nonprofit because I heard how much it meant to my Mom to work in rural Georgian towns dealing with civil rights problems in the '60s. I may have gotten the courage to be poor as hell, but happier than ever, working on something that really means something to me by learning how my dad uprooted and moved to Maine to start in a low position in a waste water treatment plant, a job he would work his way up to superintendent by the end of his career.

Understanding where you come from—whether it's parents, friends, a town or a subculture—can help you to be more sure in where you are and what direction you head. I didn't find punk arbitrarily twenty years ago. I didn't jump into working at Razorcake without thinking it through. Being aware of your choices, being active in the course of your life, is a huge part of what punk rock is to me. It's *Do It Yourself*, and not *Take It As It Comes* for a reason. If you want a better anything—life, scene, venue—get active, actually do something about it. Sure, it's not easy. Sure, people will think you're stupid, crazy, or just plain wrong.

I mean, how many people truly do what they want in their lives? How many people put off that one thing they want to do until their retirement, only to give up by the time they get there? I'm proud that people think my parents are crazy, stupid, and foolish. They're also happy. I get emails talking about pirates and my dad climbing palm trees for coconuts. So whatever it is that you're putting off, stop it. Make sacrifices, be scared, take a chance, but be prepared. Make sure you've got a rudder before you try sailing upstream.

—Megan

AD DEADLINES

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August 1st, 2006

ISSUE #35

September 1st, 2006

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"Hint: When decoding politicians' babble, to get to the real agenda, don't read their lips, read their budgets." —Greg Palast, *Armed Madhouse*

This issue is dedicated to: The engagement of Jim Ruland and Nuvia Crisol Guerra, Designated Dale for graduating at the top of his class after being laid off of his job of sixteen years.

Contact Razorcake via our fancy new website: www.razorcake.org

Thank you list: "My hand hurts. Thanks." thanks to Art Fuentes, who, if you look closely, drew about a third of this issue; Scads of bands have asked and you're the first to actually do it thanks to Russ Van Cleave for The Tim Version, Dukes of Hillsborough tour diary; Greg Palast's math's fuckin' tight thanks to Chris Pepus for the interview; O, boy, I really wish Arnold's eye was bleeding and there was an extension chord around his neck thanks to Keith Rosson for the illustrations, plus the Greg Palast and Chaos In Tejas layouts; Man, I hope Cujo's going to be okay thanks to Julia Smut for the Dan Sartain layout; Sanks and have a rice day! thanks to Amy Adoyzie for her Mormons layout and pictures (Gus, too!); You got me. Those are AV jacks, not 1/4" cables thanks to Kat Jetson for her Bad Dudes interview; Donuts filled with Molson thanks to Ben Snakepit for the Pink Razors interview and photos; "No, I'll do it at home... so... I can get high," thanks to Fose for his Rhythm Chicken illustration; Is that a small baby wrapped in a banana leaf? thanks to Nuvia Crisol Guerra for her picture in Jim's column; Nardwuar has chest hair like Nicolas Cage in

Valley Girl thanks to Mitch Clem for his illustration; ADMF thanks to Graham Russell for his interview and pictures of Dan Sartain; Ex-table tennis pro thanks to Alexander Krone and Terri Meuser for the Gorilla Angreb photos; They're, like, total douchebags thanks to Jessica Miller and Jon San Agustin for the Bad Dudes photos; Tubin' on a river, watchin' bands on a bridge thanks to Jack Barfield and Matt Jasek for their Chaos In Tejas photos; Review long enough and someone'll call you a brickbrain thanks to Stevo, Jessica T., Kurt Morris, Daryl, Keith Rosson, Joe Evans III, Buttersoth, Brian Mosher, Mike Frame, Ty Stranglehold, Mr. Z, Chris Pepus, Norb, Jenny Moncayo, Donofthedeat, Jimmy Alvarado, and Jennifer Whiteford. One of the following people touched your last magazine because they helped pack 'em: Kiyoshi Nagazawa, Donofthedeat, Stacy Smilanick, Sara Isett, Ryan Leach, Mor Fleisher, Chris Devlin; Like little elves in a digital library, uploading reviews onto our website: Brandy Vick, Stacy Smilanick, Mr. Z, Patricia, and Donofthedeat. *Megan Pants:* "I fell." thanks to the ChITels and MoMacs for a seat in the vans.



Technology's amazing.
They make sailor caps that small?

Maya Rae Montana,
daughter to Jessica Mills and Tico Longa.

RAZORCAKE

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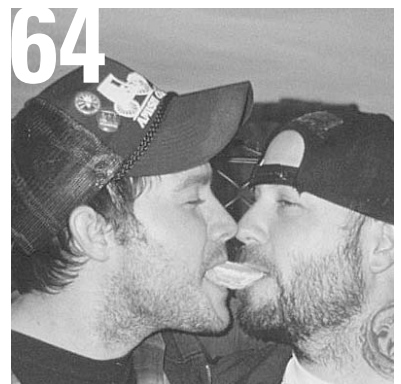
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"Art is kind of a very self-centered field to be in, as opposed to feeding the hungry."

How to Find Mad Happiness

Sometimes, when Mad Happy plays, it feels awkward to sit in the audience and watch. It's the way that they look at each other, Mike Ill and Rivka, these sidelong glances that turn into eye-locks. In the audience, you can feel like you are intruding on some profoundly intimate moment. But, then you realize that this is it. This is true love, clichéd as it may sound, both for each other and for the music. This is what it's like to be Mad Happy.

Somehow, Mike and Rivka found me online and invited me to a show at a Silverlake club. I grabbed a friend and walked inside, not really knowing what to expect, and left impressed with the beat-heavy electronic pop and hippy-punk stage presence. We kept in touch after they left town and eventually headed back to their current home in Florida (Mike is originally from Hoboken and Rivka is a Brooklyn native). When they emailed to tell me that they would be back in Los Angeles for another leg of their seemingly endless string of self-booked tours, I asked for an interview.

We met on the ground floor of Quon Brothers Jazz Club in Chinatown, home to the monthly laptop-friendly event Data Age where Mike and Rivka were set to play. We spoke as they waited for Chinese food and continued chatting long after dinner was over and the record had been sealed. Sometime after the tape had ended, I mentioned to Mike and Rivka that I can't even imagine being a musician, that the thought of spending the bulk of the year on tour is something I cannot fathom. Mike responded that he couldn't think of living life any other way.

Liz: How did you get together?

Rivka: We met in a sweat lodge. It's an American Indian sauna. They make it out of blankets and sticks. They put rocks in the center and we saw each other for the first time in the sweat lodge.

Mike Ill: They put really hot rocks in there and sprinkle water on them and it gets insanely steamy and hot. We were at one down at this place in New Jersey and we just met each other's eyes and our hearts dropped down. A friend of ours recently told me that when something like that happens, it's a gift from the ancestors.

Rivka: They consider the rocks to be like the souls of the grandfathers and every time they burn another rock, you would say...

Mike: "Hello, grandfather."

Rivka: Yeah, they would say hello to the grandparents.

Mike: We didn't hook up for a while either because we were both on personal journeys at the time. So we saw each other and thought, "Okay, there's the enemy. Don't let it happen." Then we kind of got together just to make some music and we ended up totally falling in love and not doing music together for about four years. The kind of music we were doing was opposite. Then we were like, "If we're going to be on the road together, we should figure out a way to do it."

Liz: What kind of music were you doing at the time?

Rivka: I was doing a cappella singing, mostly the kind of melodies that, I guess, I got from my childhood, from singing without music and stuff. I was just singing and doing poetry. It was really dramatic and very sad. I was really young and everyone felt really bad for me. It was pretty much like that.

Liz: Were you singing in the subway?

Rivka: Sometimes. I have sung in the subway, but mostly going to open mics around New York City and doing shows around there—little coffee houses and little theaters—places that would have a cappella singing.

Mike: I was just starting to put my solo thing together. I had a band for a while with my best friend, my partner Zef NoiSe from Mutiny Zoo Records. I was just writing so many songs and we weren't working with the band, so I just started playing my guitar. Our music has always been—well Zef and I have always been influenced by stuff from all over the map—so it was punk and hip-hop influenced and then folk and jazz influenced.

Liz: How did you come up with the sound that you have now?

Rivka: Well, we started out traveling together and I was opening up for Mike and his band, which was The Poor Old Souls. We came up with the name Mad Happy when he wanted something more positive. So we had come up with the name Mad Happy for his band, which I wasn't going to be in. Then, I was doing backup vocals for them and opening up for them and it kind of didn't work. One was this punk rock thing and the other was this really dramatic set of poetry. So I stopped opening for them and

then we started working on stuff together. First, the van died. Then the bass player we were working with, his father passed away, so he had to leave the tour. We tried one show with the drummer as a trio. I'm sure we could have worked on it and made it work, but it sounded terrible. Mike had this drum machine. He had started programming twenty years before. I guess he had started programming when he was barely a teenager. He had this drum machine that I told him not to buy a year before. I told him, "Don't buy anymore mechanical garbage to collect dust. You don't need anymore toys." He pulled it out and programmed the songs that we were doing really quickly and everyone dug it. So, we started working on that because it seemed more financially feasible. Then it started developing. We started bringing in all of these influences from all of these places and we have evolved a lot since then, a lot.

Liz: Did you ever think that what you are doing was unattainable?

Rivka: Yeah, definitely. I think I always thought I could do it. Otherwise, I don't think I could have made it out. People talk about the inner child and all that. I'm really into all that self-help stuff. [Giggles.] I had this vision of my life. I thought that this is so amazing. I can't believe that this is my life. I had a moment holding up the inner child to look out my eyes. It was a great moment.

Liz: Was music something you wanted to do as a kid?

Rivka: Yeah, always. Jewish women aren't allowed to sing in front of men. It's definitely rebellion. I guess I just really wanted to be a boy. I wanted to do what they could.

Liz: You grew up orthodox, right?

Rivka: Yeah.

Liz: Is what you're doing very rebellious, given your background?

Rivka: Well, it doesn't feel rebellious anymore. It's definitely stuff that I'm not supposed to be doing, according to their rules. But, I don't care about their rules anymore, so I'm over the rebellion.

Liz: When you grow up in very religious surroundings, as an adult, is there any way you can totally remove that influence from your life?

Rivka: I don't think that you can totally remove yourself from it. I'm afraid that, when you forget things, you can repeat them

Knowing that I'm going to hell is one of the things that help me be more real.

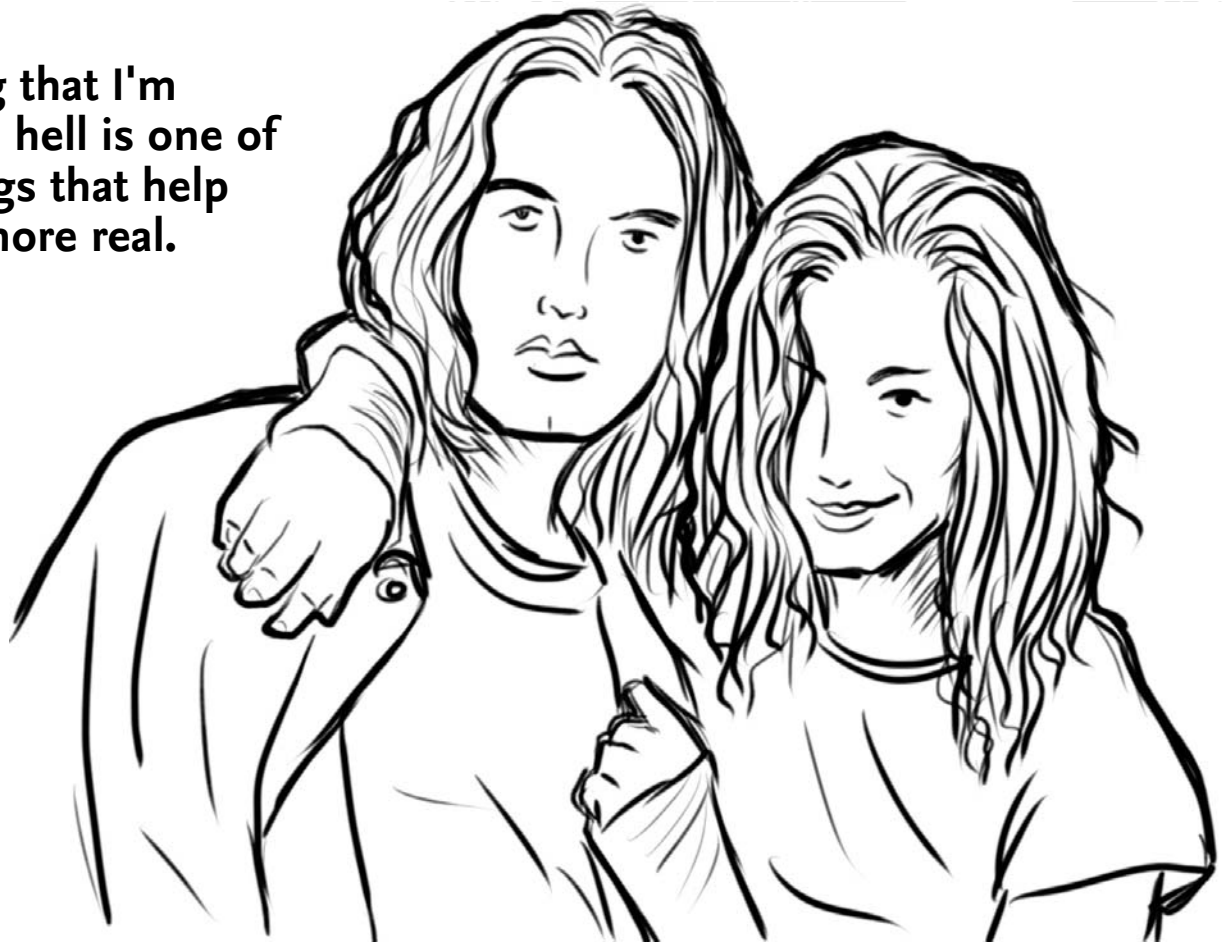


illustration by Art Fuentes

in a different way. I think that the whole kosher thing is ridiculous, no offense to the kosher people. I really go out of my way not to take my own eating habits to an extreme, even though they are extreme. We do this whole thing where we don't combine proteins and carbohydrates in one given meal, but I really try hard not to be religious about it.

Mike: And we're very successful at not being religious about it.

Rivka: What was my point? I think that it doesn't really go anywhere. I spent a lot of time not having anything to do with my family and stuff. I think that's just kind of a drama. Even though they aren't really respectful, necessarily, I don't necessarily have to talk with them about anything when I know that they're disrespectful and I already know and sort of accept them as they are. Doing that, there is definitely no way to remove yourself because you can cut off your whole family but they aren't going to disappear from your mind. I don't have any friends from when I was a kid. They were all the kids I went to school with. Most of them never even checked out going off the path. They are completely removed from me, 100%. But, that's not gone. Do you know what I mean? All of those happy things and all of those painful things, those are still in my mind. They still find their way into my poetry.

Mike: I definitely have guilt. My parents are Catholic. My mom was a nun and my dad was in the seminary, so I have a part of me

that definitely feels guilty: going to bars and being part of an alcohol scene, doing drugs and being selfish, working on art. Art is kind of a very self-centered field to be in, as opposed to feeding the hungry or something like that. I have all that stuff ingrained in me. There's always a definite appreciation for people who do see that when you are doing stuff to the people around you, you are doing stuff to yourself. But, at the same time, I think that knowing that I'm going to hell is one of the things that help me be more real. All these people are just like, "I'll worry about going to hell later," not noticing what fucking jerk-offs they are now.

Liz: Does it get hard to work on music with someone who is also your partner romantically?

Rivka: Oh, yeah. There are definitely a lot of screaming fights. Mostly, the screaming is on my part. It's just something that we were raised with, women. In a few generations, we will work that stuff out. It's hard because you have such different boundaries with the level of respect you're dealing with. It's really complicated, but it's also better, in a way, because you really can say anything. If you really think that something is not happening, you can say so, whereas if you're working with someone, you're both just trying to reach your artistic climax and you don't really want to step on that for somebody. You're over-polite.

Liz: It seems like a lot of your music focuses on positivity. Where does that come from?

Rivka: Just really wanting to be happy. We're writing a lot of songs about manic episodes lately. We're just on the up side.

Mike: It's the kind of music that we were raised on. The stuff I grew up listening to was European religious music, like Bach, and it's really emotional and it's really uplifting or really heartbreaking. For playing bars and parties and stuff, we were just trying to develop enough material where we could be uplifting and rockin' the whole time. Now, we have enough material where we could start putting some heartbreaking stuff in there and still be able to rock for a long time. In terms of content, we both have a very serious commitment to ideals and spirituality ingrained in us from our parents being so dedicated to their own spirituality. We have big differences to how we do it. We both probably feel like music is real and we are actually creating something and putting it out there to change people's lives. We want to do it, instead of saying, "Yeah man, go do heroin for twenty years and wear a piss bag," we want to be like have a great time.

For more information on Mad Happy or to find the album Renegade Geeks (produced by Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth of Talking Heads and Tom Tom Club and Zef Not\$e) go to www.madhappy.com.

—Liz Ohanesian





LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

"I'm all for teachers getting bigger paychecks, but I didn't want to get clotheslined on my way to breakfast."

TAMALE TOUR

Around Oaxaca in Twelve Tamales

BORN TO OAXACA

I flew out of Tijuana at one AM Thursday night, arrived in Oaxaca City early in the morning, and went straight to the zocalo (city center) for breakfast. Oaxaca's teachers had gone on strike and had moved into the zocalo to protest low wages. They'd rigged hundreds of tarps and tents in the streets around the city center, blocking traffic and generally being a nuisance. The first thing you notice about Oaxaquenos is that they are short, so all the ropes, wires, and strings for their jerry-rigged tarps were strung at neck-level. I'm all for teachers getting bigger paychecks, but I didn't want to get clotheslined on my way to breakfast.

At a small café in the heart of the zocalo, I had the first two tamales of the tour: a pair of red mole tamales wrapped in cornhusks. Mole is a blend of chiles, herbs and spices that have been dried and fried and mixed together. Some recipes call for as many as seven different kinds of chile. There are many different kinds of mole (red, yellow, black, etc.) but each cook has their own preferences and traditions, so that no two moles are alike. The tamales were shaped like little burritos and covered in salsa that was sweet and fruity. It overwhelmed the taste of the red mole and the whole thing tasted like spaghetti sauce. No bueno. My tamale tour was getting off to an inauspicious start.

WON'T YOU TAKE ME TO... JUCHITAN

Imagine going to a party where all the men are dressed as waiters and the women all look like Frida Kahlo. That was the scene at the Vela (festival) San Vicente Ferrer, the patron saint for survivors of disasters at sea in the city of Juchitan in the Istmo (Isthmus) region of Oaxaca. Juchitan knows how to party. Every night for the last fifteen days in the month of May, someone throws a party. I don't mean a dozen people gathered around a grill for hot dogs and beer, I'm talking hundreds of people—despite a strict dress code and a cover charge at the door. Women wrap their donation in tissue paper, which they present to the majordomo (patron and chief organizer). The men buy a case of

Coronitas—little bottles of Corona that on a hot night cry out to be drunk in a single swallow, which I did, many, many times.

A vacant lot had been strung with lights and outfitted with a huge stage for the musicians. The men were dressed in white guayaberas and black slacks. The women wore short, sleeveless blouses (huipils) and long, flowing skirts (enaguas) of different colors and heavily embroidered with flowers. Each costume was the same yet utterly unique. The three women I arrived with had spent hours getting ready, which included visits to the flower market and beauty shop to get fresh flowers woven into their hair.

Once we'd paid our admission, the majordomo found a place for us to sit and kept bringing us plates of food and bottles of beer. One of the ladies didn't drink, the other was pregnant, and soon I had a box of Coronitas at my feet and a plate of food on my lap. My job was to eat the food before it got cold and drink the beer before it got hot. By the time I ate the tacos dorado, chile releno, tamarindo (cups of candied fruit), and mango and ciruela curado (fruit cured with alcohol), I had no room for the ginormous tamale, which was shaped like a waffle and wrapped in a banana leaf.

When I finally ate it—at around four AM the next morning—the masa was cold and greasy and not particularly satisfying and that's about all I remember.

ON THE FLIPSIDE

The next day we went to another vela in Juchitan, this time on the other side of the river. It was called the Vela Cheguigo, which means, "festival on the other side of the river." This vela was on a slightly smaller scale and had several patrons, so we chose the one with the best food. Having learned my lesson from the night before, I ate my tamale first. It was wrapped in a banana leaf like a piece of candy and tied off at each end. Inside was a delicious concoction of pollo con elote y pasas (chicken with corn and raisins). The beers weren't as plentiful on the other side of the river, but the girls were prettier and the tamale kicked ass.

ARMADILLO TACO

Tamales are generally wrapped in either cornhusks or banana leaves. The cornhusks tend to be more porous and are used wher-

ever corn is plentiful, i.e. throughout Mexico. The banana leaves are used in the more tropical region and are excellent for trapping the flavors and sealing them in a nice square package. The masa in these tamales tends to be tinted green by dint of having been steamed inside the banana leaves. The next day, I sampled both varieties at a late lunch at a new friend's house on Jacaranda Street in Juchitan.

The first tamale was shaped, appropriately enough, like a small ear of corn and was filled with elote and dressed with fresh cream skimmed from the top of new milk. Perfect for breakfast. The other tamale was a huge specimen, like two pieces of green wonder bread stacked together, and filled with pollo y mole negro—the most common tamale in the Oaxaca region. The sweetness of the mole tended to overwhelm the other flavors in the tamale and, for some reason, I wasn't feeling the love for the mole. Maybe it was the discovery of molotes (deep fried masa stuffed with beef and shaped like a hush puppy) and the after effects of the armadillo (yes, armadillo) I'd been coaxed into eating along with my tamales. The fact was, I was four days into my tamale tour and my search for the greatest tamale was not bearing fruit.

OUR LADY OF LA MERCED PRAY FOR ME

Huatulco sits on the Pacific coast, a resort town for Mexican nationals. Huatulco is a great place to sit in a palapa and drink Victoria Beer and gorge yourself on shrimp, scallops, and lobster in chipotle sauce and served in a pineapple. If you like swimming in the moonlight, listening to the surf, and watching fireflies dance in the mangroves, Huatulco is the place for you. But Huatulco is not tamale country.

After four days of bliss at the beach, I boarded a bus for Oaxaca City. There are three kinds of buses in Oaxaca. There are the Colectivos, the public buses that will take you just about anywhere for ten pesos. They are cheap, run-down, and operated by lunatics who take great pleasure in gunning their death machines down terrible roads. The privately owned buses, of which there are no less than a dozen, are cheap, comfortable and efficient. These buses hold their own in comparison to European motor coaches and make

**I heartily
recommend
Oaxacan
cheese to
anyone who
hasn't
bought into
the myth
of bad
cholesterol.**



Photo by Nuvia Crisol Guerra

Greyhound look like the turd wagon it is. The third and premier level of bus service includes fully reclining seats and the pleasure of watching foreign films in badly dubbed Spanish. The drivers of these first-class machines are, however, just as insane as those who pilot the public rattle traps.

Oaxaca is mountainous country. There are over twenty mountains taller than 10,000 feet in Oaxaca. Maneuvering around these mountains and up and down the myriad hills, canyons, and switchbacks over and over again makes the bus drivers as fearless as a fighter pilot weaned on Rottweiler blood. Huatulco sits at sea level. Oaxaca City's elevation is over 5,000 feet. The ride between the two cities is five hours long, and it's all uphill. We boarded the bus at ten o'clock. At eleven o'clock it started to rain. At 11:01 I began to pray.

I arrived in Oaxaca City eight hours later, exhausted and deranged. I went immediately to La Merced, a market on the east side of town on the outskirts of the Centro, looking for something to eat. Feeling slightly fortified by Oaxacan green juice (orange, pineapple, celery, and cilantro), I ordered two tamales wrapped in corn husks. The first was shaped like a tube of oil paint. Ingredients: mole rojo con pollo. It tasted a little bland but the salsa roja woke up the flavor. The second tamale was shaped like a pair of hash browns mashed together and was speckled with yellow pumpkin flower and green parsley, epazote, and green tomatoes. Amazing. I'd survived a harrowing ordeal. This was my reward.

MOLE NEGRO

On the heels of an exhausting day stumping around dusty ruins and perusing

medieval markets, I started my day at Sanchez Pasqua, a market near Guelagueta Stadium. I sat down at a tiny little nook across from a flower seller and next to a tortilla maker and ordered some tamales. The first was wrapped in corn husks and shaped like a rocket out of Flash Gordon. The massive masa missile was stuffed with pollo y rajas (chicken and strips of chile peppers). It was so good, I almost cried.

The second was shaped like a pop tart, wrapped in a banana leaf, and filled with mole negro—the only tamale unique to the Oaxaca region because it's made with a chilhuacle negro, a small black chile grown only in Oaxaca. It combines majestically with chocolate to form a mixture that is both spicy and sweet. It is Oaxaca's signature sensation. This was the first time I'd tasted it in a tamale sans pollo. The result was far less greasy and it tasted like something out of a master chef's kitchen. Best. Tamale. Ever. Or so I thought.

Pushing my luck, I asked if she had any other kinds of tamales. Sí, sí, she said enthusiastically as she produced a tamale shaped like a miniature submarine and nearly as big. As I lovingly unwrapped the corn husk skin, I noted how heavy the sucker was, and after penetrating it with my fork I saw why: it was filled with frijoles negros. You might think it a little decadent to stuff eight ounces of masa with refried black beans, but when you drizzle it with two kinds of salsa roja—from mild to wild—you will know why you were put here on this earth, but the best was yet to come....

AND THE WINNER IS...

By now I was starting to feel like a tamale myself. My flesh was getting a little

lardy and I didn't get dressed in the morning so much as wrap myself in a tight-fitting husk. After a few hours under the Oaxacan sun, I'd steam up and give off a scent of corn meal. Birds circled overhead and wild dogs followed me in the street.

I took a bus to the ruin of Mitla. After poking around for a bit, I found an old woman selling tamales out of a pot in the tourist market for twelve pesos a pop. I ordered one and she served it on a tiny styrofoam plate and dumped a radioactive pile of salsa next to it. I took my prize to a bench outside a church built on top of a Zapotec temple that had an eye-shaped window cut into the thick stone wall. I carefully unwrapped a banana leaf the size of a parachute and it crumbled into a heap, a pyramid of green-tinted masa, mole negro, and a few odd strands of pollo, which at first I mistook for Oaxacan cheese, a cheese so tough and elastic you can grill it like a fillet of meat, which I heartily recommend to anyone who hasn't bought into the myth of bad cholesterol. The mixture of masa, mole, meat, and chile was so perfect, it changed my brain chemistry. Oaxaquenos say that mole negro gives you vivid dreams and it's true. That night, I dreamt I had been called to the Pentagon to work on a secret project for the government that involved activating ancient temples. Somehow, the outcome was pegged to hippopotamus races. I have no explanation for this, but I can still recall the expression on the face of the hippopotamus and the taste of the tamale.

—Jim Ruland





SHIFTLESS WHEN IDLE

MADDY TIGHT PANTS

"I was cursed with a fate roughly equivalent to being forced to mosh at a Pearl Jam concert."

THE DEFEAT OF WINTER

Hold the presses! Strike the alarm bells! Prepare the pop punk records and summon the Tootsie Roll Pop Distribution Network! After a lengthy hiatus, Ms. Tight Pants is back and ready to enthrall you with tales of deviancy, ridiculousity, and love of all things sugar-based!

You see, unlike the vast majority of my zine brethren, I dare not drag you into the twisted cauldrons of despair and horror! When I go nuts, I do not continue to write, except to keep up the regular complaint letters to General Mills ("Sir, I have always been a loyal customer—until that day when I swallowed a small mouse dropping along with my spoonful of Lucky C.") to obtain free sustenance. You will not get any Jets to Brazil lyrics out of me!

Anyway, anyway, ANYWAY (to steal my favorite Nørbism), I digress. The point is, although I did retreat, I did not, in the grand tradition of Bruce Springsteen (by way of John Kerry), surrender! So, I could bore you with the details of what it's like to completely lose your mind (see: Billy Chenowith), or... I could write a column about how my hatred for Catholicism led me to commit arson. The choice, dear readers, is obvious!

When I was a fifteen-year-old, angst-ridden, purple-haired punk, who spent my days listening to the Queers and my nights sneaking out to get high and sneaking into swimming pools, I was cursed with a fate roughly equivalent to being forced to mosh at a Pearl Jam concert. Yes, I went to an all-girls' Catholic high school, where I wore a uniform and had to attend mass. Not punk!

At the beginning of my freshman year, I was a little naïve, a little too optimistic that high school would be something other than complete and total brain destruction. In other words, I was known to proudly sport a sweatshirt bearing my high school's name, thus qualifying me for a level of lameness somewhere in between the Dave Matthews Band and Rancid.

However, within four short months, I had systematically begun destroying that same sweatshirt. When I sat in my freshman theology class, being told a few weeks after my dad died that everything happened for a reason, I took my math-class-required compass, and used the sharp edge to rip off the lettering on my beloved sweatshirt. When a priest told me that I would be going to a level of hell containing both rocks *and* fire

for various crimes—including but not limited to—such grave infractions as dying one's hair and refusing to pray (roughly equivalent offenses, apparently), I kept ripping off the letters.

By the time I got to sophomore year, my sweatshirt just said "A" in big red plaid. Somehow, this still met basic requirements of the uniform code. Then, in the middle of the year, during a particularly painful geometry class, the "A" went the way of my trusty compass, and I was left with a filthy sweatshirt containing some ripped up plaid threads, and I was ready to take my rebellion well beyond the bounds of clothing destruction!

By sophomore level, I had firmly and decisively decided that I only really liked one person in my school, my friend Monica. Luckily, she decided the same about me, and we were united against the rest of the world with a level of deep-seated hatred the likes of which had last been seen in the Bloody Lanes of Civil War battlefields. Sadly, we were not armed with rifles and did not have ready access to trenches. So, we did the next best thing. We decided late one night at Monica's house that we had had enough. We would no longer associate with anyone from our high school. We would keep our engagement with our God-loving classmates to the utmost minimum! We would not speak unless spoken to, and maybe not even then! We would curse the fates that had brought us to this evil place! In short, we would eat lunch outside!

Allow me to explain. Our school, in its benevolence, allowed students to eat in the courtyard outside the cafeteria. Every spring, dozens of plaid-skirt-wearing girls would venture out to the carefully manicured lawn, and sit on the grass, pretending to eat carrots, and talk about weight loss. Monica and I would also trudge outside, and sit on the grass, jamming Twix bars (stolen from the lunch line) into our mouths while talking about how much we hated everyone.

So, late that night at Monica's house, I suddenly had a revelation of Biblical proportions. The usually carefully worded student handbook did *not* state that one could only eat outside during pleasant weather. We could start, that very next week, in the middle of a cold Midwestern November. Yes, it would get cold! Yes, it would get colder, and colder still! But this would not just be a policy of avoidance! This would be

a test of resolve against all the evil forces conspiring against us! We would not back down! We would rebuke Christianity and face the elements, with bravery and courage! We *would* eat lunch outside!

The next week, we put our plan into motion. The cafeteria supervisor gave us a strange look, shrugged her shoulders, and mumbled something about how we'd be inside in a few weeks. It was about fifty degrees outside—a little cold, but no big deal. It was amazing. For thirty-five minutes, we were free from all our enemies. We congratulated ourselves for our ingenuity and ate our Twix bars with newfound relish!

Two weeks went by, and the weather grew colder: forty-five degrees, forty degrees. I started wearing long underwear under my shredded sweatshirt. The cafeteria supervisor said, "You girls will be inside in no time." We took it as a challenge. Thirty-five degrees, thirty degrees, then, one morning, snow. We looked at each other, zipped up our jackets, and went outside. The ground was covered, but we could not back down! We abandoned our original location on the grass, and headed for a corner outside the gym, next to a large bush. We sat on the concrete steps, ate our Twix bars, and made statements like, "It really isn't that cold," while shivering. But we both knew that this thirty-five minutes was all we had. When we went home, I had to deal with an increasingly psychotic mother and Monica had to deal with her almost-divorced parents. Like Pilgrims fleeing oppression and serfs rebelling against the tsar, this was as close to freedom as it got, and we would not give it up!

A week later, and it was Christmas break. By the time we got back, in January, the temperature had dropped to fifteen degrees. We knew we were in trouble. When we started high school, we were both too broke to afford the regulation uniform pants *and* skirt, and had made the misguided decision to purchase the skirt. Little did we know the consequences of our shopping transaction! It was fifteen degrees, we were wearing skirts, and, while everyone ate their carrots in the warm glow of the lunchroom, we were headed into the wilderness!

We went outside that first day back, and it was brutal. Fifteen minutes out, and my legs started to turn bluish-purple. Monica's teeth started chattering. We looked at each other, but neither of us said anything. We ate lunch in silence. We were in trouble.



We would not
back down!

We would
rebutte
Christianity
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We would
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outside!



That night, Milwaukee was dumped with eight inches of snow. The morning news predicted lows around zero. I put on four long-sleeved shirts, a sweater, and my beat-up sweatshirt. I wore three pairs of knee-high socks, two pairs of gloves, and my warmest hat. I sweated profusely throughout my morning classes, but refused to allow myself to take off any clothes, on the grounds that I needed to store up as much heat as possible. At noon, Monica and I went outside. We sat in the corner of the steps, shivering against each other. "Look at all those idiots inside," Monica said, pointing to dozens of warm, happy bodies laughing and talking inside. "We would never be that lame."

"Never," I agreed, and tried to eat my increasingly frozen Twix bar without opening my mouth any wider than absolutely necessary. "Losers."

The weekend weather report predicted that Milwaukee was about to enter into a serious cold spell, even by Midwestern standards. Next week, the temperature would reach a low of twenty degrees below zero. There was talk of closing area schools because of the risk of frostbite while waiting for the school bus.

It was clear that we were on the verge of a crisis, but to back down now would be humiliating, a betrayal of all that we held most dear, a renunciation of our hatred and an embrace of the Catholic church and all its humble servants! To go inside would mean that we had lost, that the powers of school, God, and country were too great for two fifteen-year-old punks to handle! We had made it this far, and we *had* to continue... but how?

Monday morning, I woke up with an idea. I gathered the necessary supplies and

called Monica. "I figured it out," I said. "You'll see."

At noon, we opened the doors to the courtyard, and a cold blast of winter air instantly sapped all our carefully conserved body heat. We were freezing by the time we made it over to the concrete steps. Monica looked at me, worried. And then I sat down, pulled out a lighter, held it to the bush on the edge of the steps, and flicked it on. Take that, Catholicism! A minute later, we had a small fire going, and huddled around it, still shivering, but euphoric. We hurriedly ate our Twix bars and added the wrappers to the flames. The fire grew and started producing actual heat. We pulled our heads down, and felt a wonderful stinging sensation as our faces slowly thawed.

Then the wind started to pick up and whipped around at our humble fire, threatening to destroy it. I panicked and grabbed some twigs lying behind the bush, shook the snow off, set them on fire, and threw them into the bush. All of a sudden, the bush emitted a loud whooshing sound and ignited! In the matter of a few seconds, we went from a small, undetectable fire to a blazing inferno! Flames swept up the branches and into the cold air above, outward against the brick building, and nipped at our feet!

"Holy shit!" Monica yelled, and we jumped back as the flames grew higher and higher. We tried to kick some snow onto the flames, but it was no use. The fire grew hotter and hotter, and in a few minutes, we were sweating, pressed up against the few feet of non-burning steps that remained.

"Ha!" I said. "It's even *warm*er outside than in that stupid, fucking cafeteria!" We laughed as sweat rolled down our faces and the flames leapt six feet in the air. "Look," I shouted, standing up, as I tore off my five layers of clothes until I was down to a t-shirt, and,

still sweating, screamed into the increasingly blazing courtyard.

We had officially done it! We had not only born the elements! We had defeated winter itself! We had reached the pinnacle of rebellion—against school, teachers, parents, and nature! We were punks united against the world, sweating in the middle of a record cold spell!

I leaned over, grabbed my sweatshirt, and threw it into the flames. I was ecstatic! Monica was laughing so hard she was crying! We grabbed each other and started jumping up and down with punk rock glee!

Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw people running. Towards us. Screaming. Teachers. The lunchroom supervisor. Students. As the first one reached us, she tried to stomp on the flames, but jumped away as the fire threatened to ignite her jean jumper. Two more teachers followed, grabbed us, and led us inside as the lunchroom supervisor threw a bucket of water on the burning bush. Other students followed, helping to put out the fire as we were marched inside for a lengthy discussion with the Dean of Students, who screamed that we could have burned the whole school down. When we started laughing, she gave us detentions.

As we left the office, Monica turned and said, "Can I ask you just one question?"

"What?" said the detention-giving Dean, scowling.

"Can we serve the detention outside?"

—Maddy

Send candy, Replacements mix tapes, and absurdist Russian literature to me at: 3220 Garfield Ave. South, Apt. 104, Minneapolis, MN 55408



MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADYDZIE

“Father, perhaps you don’t quite understand the American colloquialism for fellatio.”

Poor Muddled Asses

A boy from Alabama offered me the American Dream once.

I declined.

I thought it might have been too cumbersome to carry with me on my long bus trip home.

We were at Bradley’s mother’s home in Gadsden, Alabama. I was sitting on a camo comforter, perched on Bradley’s old bed as he rummaged through some of the keepsakes that he had left behind. He pulled out a long, rectangular, black case that opened to reveal a Fender Squire P-Bass with a red body, white pick guard and a blue strap. Bradley had played that bass while he was in a band called The American Dream and named the guitar after it. He asked if I wanted the bass along with the Peavey Patriot amp that sat in the closet.

Bradley wanted to bestow the total package to me. A red, white and blue four-string Dream and a patriotic amp to blast my pledge of allegiance.

I appreciated the gesture, but couldn’t accept. It was enough just to be offered such a gift and I already had a sweet cherry red midget bass at home. It ended up with me through some botched tweak deal and came fully stocked with a peeling mohawk skull Exploited sticker. Dreams do come true.

I don’t care that this is probably the most un-punk-rock thing to say: I’m so stoked to be an American.

The U.S. is far from perfect—our governing administration is run by a reactionary, shits-for-brain, war-mongering chimpanzee passing for a fifth-grader who hears super secret messages from Jesus. But I shudder to think what my life may have been like if I were born and raised in China (victim of infanticide, due to one-child policy and a preference for sons), Vietnam (uneducated, married with five kids, wearing pajamas all day) or Australia (kidnapped by wild dingo pack, best friend is a koala bear).

There’s just no other place in the world like a small Los Angeles suburb where you can get grilled onion In N Out burgers, perfectly seasoned bowls of steamy pho, or a veggie burrito so plump and delicious that you’d swear you were eating God’s pinky toe. There’s just no other place where you can

escape to as a refugee from war, raise a daughter who earns a B.A. with honors, so that she may someday write columns for a punk rock fanzine calling the President of the United States a jerkface dickhole. There’s just no other place, period.

So many of my character-shaping experiences are so uniquely American/Immigrant-American/Vapid-American that I can’t imagine them occurring in any other space-time continuum, in any other country with any other Americans. Here are a couple of the shining moments of my soon-to-be-made-into-a-TV-movie epic saga of a girl and her American life:

Like Father, Like Cocksucker

As a sixteen-year-old girl growing up in California amidst body image issues, insurmountable insecurities, and enough angst to write volumes of clichéd poetry, the last thing I needed was to have my father call me a cocksucker.

Y’see, I was crushin’ hardcore on actor Kevin Spacey and would obsessively watch him play an innocent gimp who was a masterful conman in *The Usual Suspects*. During one of my many viewings, dad walked in just as the line-up scene began where each of the five main characters repeated the line, “Hand me the keys, you fucking cocksucker.”

He stood for a while, eyes affixed to the screen, to let those lines absorb into his yellow skull before continuing into the garage. I didn’t think much of it, until later that day when I heard dad call one of my younger brothers a cocksucker.

And so began the phase in our young lives where dad lovingly referred to us as his kin who sucked cock. He never said it with any malice; as a matter of fact it became a term of endearment. We were amused initially, chuckling nervously like a parent who hears his toddler cuss for the first time. Dad continued to call us cocksuckers for so long that the crudeness and inappropriate nature of the word no longer held weight. Since he never came home with a black eye or spitting bloody mouthfuls of teeth, I assume that he refrained from addressing others as blowjobbers. It seemed that he reserved that term exclusively for his kids, his rattle cocksuckers.

The term no longer meant one who was a dick slurper, instead it came to mean one

who was claimed as a dependent on dad’s tax return.

Even though he has a very limited English vocabulary, I doubt that dad was completely ignorant of what cocksucker meant—but even if he didn’t know, I, his only daughter, wasn’t about to inform him.

How was I supposed to explain to him the meaning of the word?

“Father, perhaps you don’t quite understand the American colloquialism for fellatio. Please let me clarify...”

There’s just a surreal sitcom feel to hearing your dad say in broken English, “Wat you cocksuckas want fah dinnah?”

These are the stories that fill the American consciousness with hope and pride.

Import Beer, Export Piss

It’s easy for dudes. Drink beer, pee anywhere. Sidewalks, bushes, tree stumps, dumpsters, walls, inanimate object within your blurred field of vision.

Not so simple for the ladies. We need coverage, toilet paper and the willingness to expose our entire ass in order to feel the comfort of a relieved bladder. Dudes don’t ever think about how little they think about unzipping and whipping it out. It’s not penis envy. It’s pee privilege. Just acknowledge it the next time you’re at a party and taking up room in a long toilet line when there is available shrubbery outside.

My behavior while inebriated hasn’t so much shaped my life, but has informed me of the extent to which I may take the American liberty of the pursuit of hap-pee-ness. All niceties of a civilized culture are out the window when I have to go, because I really *have* to go.

In this, the age of *Oprah* and unapologetic empowerment, I am beginning to own my drunken pee experiences and not let them own me. I’m a proud American who likes to drink cheap American beer and piss bonafide American pee.

I’ll be honest, I’ve peed myself before. Not like sitting-around-shootin’-the-shit-and-then-all-of-a-sudden-my-ass-is-nestled-in-a-puddle-of-my-urine, but more like I’m-inside-a-restroom-stall-trying-to-aim-into-the-bowl-without-touching-the-seat-because-God-knows-how-many-other-drunken-girls-have-pissed-on-the-toilet-seat-and-then-the-beer-that-I-set-on-top-of-



I don't care that this is probably the most un-punk-rock thing to say: I'm so stoked to be an American.

the-TP-dispenser-spills-on-my-jeans-so-when-I-pee-on-myself-I-drunkenly-think-that-it's-okay-because-I'll-just-say-it's-PBR. And those were the times where I was lucky enough to even get near a toilet.

Earlier this year, I found my yellow ass in a precarious position as it hung off the ledge of a fifth story window—all in my pursuit of hap-pee-ness.

We were at a hipster loft gallery space in downtown Portland, shoveling cans and cans of beers into our faces to let the terrorists know that they have not won because we are drunk with freedom and Coors Light at an afterparty. The restroom line was always a dozen deep, half of them were invariably tall, lanky white belt boys who were too refined to piss out the window of a small room across the hall. Jacie and I had enough. She grabbed my hand and led me through the crowd of unmoving bodies.

"We're not going to the bathroom! Let us through, you wieners!" I shouted at their glaring faces. "For serious! I'm not cutting in your stupid line!"

We shoved through and found ourselves in an unfinished room with bare plywood floors, a couple bags of trash, and a guy passed out in the middle. Here's where my logic fails me, since the room was practically empty and completely dark, Jacie and I could have conceivably pissed in the corner and no one would have been the wiser. I was weaving-staggering drunk and I think Jacie was somewhere near my side of the breathalyzer.

We had every excuse to just pee in the corner. But somehow it wasn't in our decorum and we deemed it un-lady-like and decided instead to pee out the window like we had seen all the dudes do earlier.

I can vividly recall three details of this momentarily retarded event.

1. Before climbing out the window, I suggest that we pee on passed-out-guy. He heard me and mumbled, "No, don't do that..."

To which I replied, "Will you be my valentine?"

2. Jacie and I squatting on a small outer ledge, five stories high, a breeze brushing past our pale asses. We were hanging backwards, with our hands haphazardly clutching the rickety window pane.

3. Safely back inside, zipping up our jeans.

I can't remember how we were able to perform the complicated maneuver of unzipping and pulling down our jeans, while defying gravity in our complete inebriated incompetence. I can only imagine that Jacie and I had two exhausted angels holding us up, shaking their heads disapprovingly, and reluctantly saving us from a horrific death with our pants and panties down at our knees and our bodies splattered against the concrete.

In this great land of ours, we can do patently idiotic things and still remain in one piece because we have been blessed with an angel known as an overwhelming sense of arrogance.

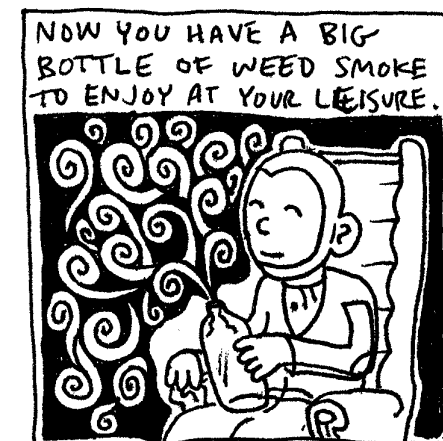
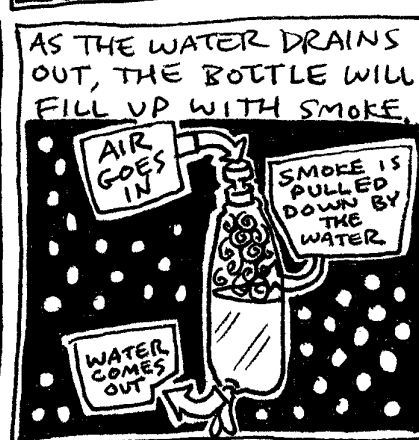
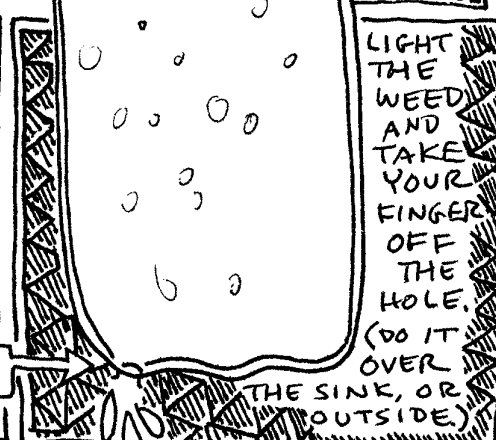
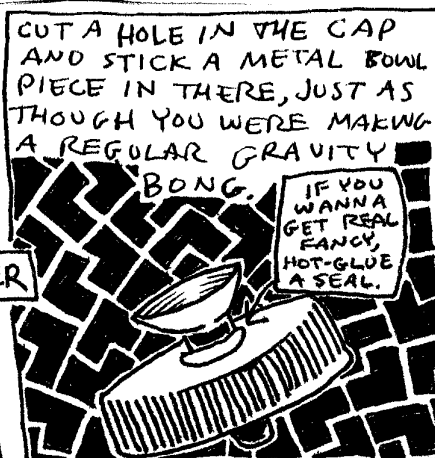
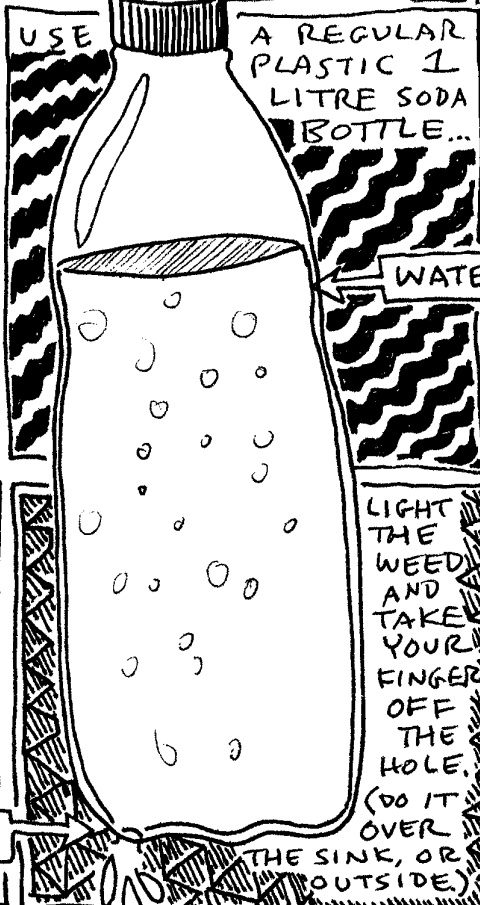
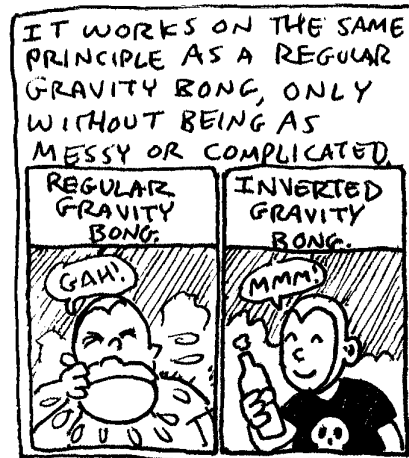
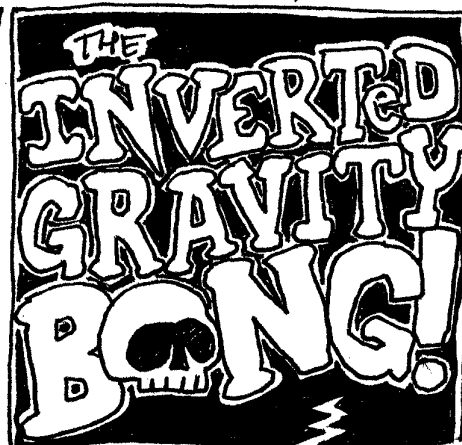
That's our can-do, go-getter spirit. We'll fix anything. Hey South Vietnam, is North

Vietnam bullying you into becoming pinkos? Let us rescue you with our big white hairy arms of justice. Hey earth, did you hear that Saddam might-be-maybe-not-really-for-sure hiding a hugemongus load of WMDs? Let us rescue all of mankind from Hussein's insane destructive force with our gleaming weapons of humanly tolerable destruction. Hey ure-thra, are you flooded with metabolized beer and need to release it quickly? Let Jacie and I crawl onto this windowsill and pee like we're invincible patriots shocking and aweing folks with our deft urination skillz.

This August I'm leaving for China, ostensibly as a volunteer English teacher in the Hunan province. I plan on photographing Super Wal-Marts to show them the abundance of our beautiful nation, and to assure them that all the junk they're producing in sweatshops with the "Made in China" stamp is showing up on store shelves to satiate our God-given right to consume. Pictures of rows and rows of SUVs sitting in traffic will inspire them to aspire for great wealth and a leather interior. My fellow patriots needn't worry, for I shall educate them in the ways of the true red, white, and blue. For the next year, you'll be reading about Operation: Engrish Prease!

—Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie.com

MY SEVENTEENTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT





"I'm a very deeply spiritual girl ... I've got Jesus tattooed on my back. "

Nardwuar Vs. Pamela Des Barres

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Pamela Des Barres: Pamela Des Barres!

Nardwuar: Pamela, show me your book right now. It has an extremely hot cover.

Pamela: Certainly, here it is. [Pamela shows her book]

Nardwuar: And what book is this, for people who don't know?

Pamela: It's called *I'm with the Band: Confessions of a Groupie*. It came out originally in '87 and it's just been republished with a new intro by Dave Navarro, who's pretty hot, and with a bunch of new pages that I wrote addendum.

Nardwuar: Pamela, looking at the cover of the book, it's censored isn't it? What happened there?

Pamela: Well, I was naked. I was a naked hippie girl and, unfortunately in America, they have to hide the titties so, this is the original of it. In England, this is the cover. They didn't hide the titty in England. They probably wouldn't in Canada either, but in America this is what you get.

Nardwuar: They get Pamela...

Pamela: What? Des Barres.

Nardwuar: Censored.

Pamela: Yes... [laughs]

Nardwuar: Pamela, what did The Beatles smell like?

Pamela: I never got close enough, unfortunately, to smell them.

Nardwuar: I thought you could smell them, like you were looking for them and you could smell them?

Pamela: Well, no, I never got close enough to smell them. I actually got to meet Paul McCartney recently though and I tried to get a whiff but that girl Heather was too close by.

Nardwuar: Pamela, you've probably said that a few times haven't you, "That girl was a bit too close by?"

Pamela: [laughs] No, because I was never a cheater. I was never with married guys. I was always wanting to marry one of 'em, but I didn't want to steal one away from someone else.

Nardwuar: You are the most famous groupie in the world and yet you've never ever had a one-night stand?

Pamela: No. I was willing to have a one-night stand with Waylon Jennings but it turned into two years so... but I was willing! Because he was sort of out of my realm. He was a country star and I was in the rock world but he turned me on!

Nardwuar: Now, Pamela, one of the people you did get intimate with was Led Zeppelin. What did Led Zeppelin smell like?

Pamela: One of the people? There were four people in Led Zeppelin. But I was only with Jimmy Page and he smelled divine.

Nardwuar: Pamela, your new book, *I'm with the...*

Pamela: *Band*.

Nardwuar: Recently reissued with censored cover.

Pamela: Yes.

Nardwuar: The Introduction is done by...

Pamela: Dave Navarro.

Nardwuar: So, the question arises Pamela...

Pamela: What does he smell like? [laughs]

Nardwuar: No, actually, a bit more than that...

Pamela: No, no, no. We're just friends.

Nardwuar: What did Dave Navarro taste like?

Pamela: I'm not gonna say. I'm not tellin'.

Nardwuar: What does he smell like then?

Pamela: He smells very sexy, sort of like hippie oil. What is that? Musk... yeah.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, I think this quote is attributed to you: "Hey, I went after what I wanted and I got it. Gloria Steinem can kiss my ass."

Pamela: [laughs] Something like that. Because she sort of put me down when the book came out because of being anti-feminist, which is so lame because I was a woman doing what I wanted to do. Isn't that what feminism is? That's what I think. So, yeah, I said that probably.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, is there a male version of Pamela Des Barres?

Pamela: Actually, yes there is. I just met him recently. He's in my new book. His name is Pleather. And that's because he has certain attributes that show up in his pleather pants. And he has slept with everybody from Courtney Love to all of L7. Anyway, he's in my new book. It's called *Let's Spend the Night Together*. It's coming out in a year.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, one of the interesting things about you is not only are you arguably the most famous groupie in the world, you were also in one of the first all-girl punk bands, The GTO's.

Pamela: I guess you could call us punk. We were more performance art. It was 1968, '69, '70s, so it was very pre-punk. But yeah, we were the first all-girl group backed by the Mothers Of Invention. Frank Zappa produced us. It was pretty far out.

Nardwuar: Now, were there any other all-girl groups at that time Pamela?

Pamela: There were a couple. Fanny was a girl group. They were a band, they played instruments, and I think that was it. I think it was just us and Fanny at that point. The Runaways came much later.

Nardwuar: Pamela, one interesting thing about The GTO's, you had John Bonham play the drums for you. What was it like having John Bonham of Led Zeppelin carry on the bottom end?

Pamela: It was amazing. The same night he played drums for us, we had Noel Redding on bass, who was Hendrix's, you know, bass player, so it was a pretty amazing band. And we had Lowell George play on the record. Jeff Beck and Rod Stewart sang back-ups. It was pretty intense. And we were just teenage girls.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, were there special groupie codes for getting to rock stars? What were the secret codes? I know Cynthia Plaster Caster had special codes. Did you have a special language that you talked when you talked to a rock star?

Pamela: No. They usually approached me, to be honest. I was in this particular scene. I didn't have to go knock on backstage doors and all that stuff. They kind of came up to me and wanted to meet me and I never really had to have any kind of code. I mean, there was a code of honor with me. I would never go after a band member that my girlfriend was crazy about, or I wouldn't be with two members in one band. That was a code.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, what about your connections to Canada? Very important in the Pamela Des Barres story, isn't it?

Pamela: Well I love Canada, but do I have a special connection that I don't know about? I mean, I've been there, I've been on TV shows, I've toured there. I love Toronto. Anything else that I...

Nardwuar: Well, Pamela Des Barres, you lost your virginity to a Canadian!

Pamela: No I didn't. He's German.

Nardwuar: No, he's from Canada!

Pamela: Nick St. Nicholas?

Nardwuar: Yes. He grew up in Canada!

Pamela: Oh that's right! [laughs] Well, he's German originally. I always think of him as German. Yes he did! He's still a good friend of mine. That's another thing about me: I stay friends with all my liaisons. It's very important to me.



Illustration by Mitch Clem, mitchclem.com

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, the drummer from Three Dog Night was originally from Vancouver. What can you tell me about the Three Dog Night singer who apparently had so much sex his cock split?

Pamela: Are we talking about Danny Hutton or Cory Wells? No, Corey Wells was married. He was the guy I had a crush on but we never did anything. I sat on his lap a few times but he was married, so, you know...

Nardwuar: I guess I'm talking about groupie injuries. Like people screwing so much that a cock will split.

Pamela: I never heard of that. I was just... I was a one-on-one girl. I didn't do weird things. I heard about weird things. I never did weird things. I never saw weird things.

Nardwuar: Nothing weird happened in front of you?

Pamela: No, no, not in front of me. I heard about the weird things.

Nardwuar: It was Chuck Negron and apparently he was screwing so much his cock split. He had to go wrap it in a towel and then he had to go to the hospital.

Pamela: Well, did he say that in his book? Is that part of his...

Nardwuar: Yes, in his book *Three Dog Nightmare*.

Pamela: [laughs] Wow.

Nardwuar: That was one hell of a nightmare. **Pamela:** He's sober now, so it's wonderful. He's probably doing much better now.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, one person you did come in contact with was Jim Morrison.

Pamela: Yes, I did.

Nardwuar: Now can you confirm this at all, Pamela Des Barres? Was it true he liked to shit on girls?

Pamela: I've never heard that. He was always a perfect gentleman with me. I think that's just one of those ridiculous rumors,

like Frank Zappa taking a dump on stage and stuff. It just didn't happen, I'm sure. He was so young! My god, who would have thought of that, that young? I don't know. He was a gentleman with me. All we did was make out. I was a virgin at the time.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, you were with the rock'n'roll singer known as Mick...

Pamela: Mick Jagger, yes.

Nardwuar: Mick Jagger. But what about Bill Wyman? I heard that he once had 265 girls in two weeks. Is that possible?

Pamela: [laughs] Did he say that? It's probably in his book, right? I don't know. I didn't get to know Bill very well. I was just hanging around with Mick, really.

Nardwuar: What were the other Stones like, you know: Bill Wyman, Charlie Watts? What were they like? 'Cause we don't hear a lot about them, but they've lived some pretty wild 265-in-two-weeks years.

Pamela: Well, Charlie Watts has been with the same woman since The Rolling Stones started. So I don't know. He didn't get up to much. But Mick used to bring him over to my house in London and one time I was getting out of the bathtub and he literally covered Charlie's eyes. So he's a quiet type, I think.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, what about Tiny Tim? Is it true that he showered ten times a day?

Pamela: Yes, it is. I'm a witness to that. I mean, I wasn't in the shower with him, but he would leave the room and go take many showers. He got all hot and bothered. He was all "Aaaaaahahah." [makes high pitch noise] He couldn't take it. The GTO's were

Nardwuar: You married Gram Parsons' daughter!

Pamela: Well, she's my goddaughter too. And she just had a baby girl and I'm her godmother as well, but I married her to her husband. I'm a minister so I can do that.

Nardwuar: Yeah, so how and why did you become a minister?

Pamela: I'm a very deeply spiritual girl. I try to live in the moment. I love everybody. I've got Jesus tattooed on my back. It just made sense that I would go in that direction. I do rock'n'roll weddings. I use people's lyrics from songs they love and weave them into the vows and stuff. If anybody wants, they can send for me and I'll marry you.

Nardwuar: So any hints as to who will be Pamela Des Barres when the movie version comes out? Any hints?

Pamela: No, just some gorgeous young girl; some sexy, hot young girl.

Nardwuar: And onto the future Pamela—this book you're putting out has a chapter on the girl from *Faster Pussycat Kill Kill*. What can you tell the people about her? She sounds fascinating! The King!

Pamela: She is. Tura Satana was a Japanese American stripper in the early '50s and she met Elvis in the south and she says she taught him how to do everything. Not only to have all various types of sex, but to dance. And the first chapter of my new book, *Let's*

Pamela, what did The Beatles smell like?

just too much for him. We would just sit on his lap and play with his hair and everything and he kept having to go take a shower.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, what about Joe Cocker and cheeseburgers? Did you hear anything about Joe Cocker and cheeseburgers? He loved cheeseburgers.

Pamela: No, I did not hear anything about Joe Cocker and cheeseburgers.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, how into satan was Jimmy Page?

Pamela: He was not into satan. That's just bullshit.

Nardwuar: Did you notice anything, though?

Pamela: No. He liked Aleister Crowley. He really liked him. He admired him and respected him. I helped him purchase a manuscript that he'd written on. He was very happy to get that. He bought his cape. He bought his mansion in Scotland, but there was nothing dark about it. They never sold their souls to the devil or anything like that.

Nardwuar: Let's go back for a second. You bought an Aleister Crowley manuscript? That sounds fascinating. A first edition? Where'd you find that? What's that about?

Pamela: Well that was 1969, so it was a long time ago and I remember Jimmy sent me a \$13,050 wire. That was a lot of money then. But can you imagine what that's worth now? I mean yeah, it wasn't even a manuscript—with the scribbles and cross-outs—the first original manuscript from one of his books.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, what about the thought that Altamont was a pre-planned satanic ritual? You were there, weren't you, at Altamont? Or were you around? What do you know about Altamont being a pre-planned satanic ritual?

Pamela: No, I was with the Stones there. So un-pre-planned. It just happened to be... they gave too much power to the Hell's Angels and they caused a really negative energy in the air. It was very bad vibes. I left even before the Stones came on and met up with Mick afterwards at the hotel. It was just such horrible energy, but it wasn't satanic or it wasn't pre-planned, either.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, you married Gram Parsons' daughter.

Pamela: Yes I did!

Nardwuar: That would be pretty cool. Who has been married by Pamela Des Barres so far? Gram Parsons' daughter...

Pamela: Gram Parsons' daughter and some other good friends of mine, some publicist people. I've only just started. I've got two more weddings lined up this year.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, your husband, Michael...

Pamela: Des Barres

Nardwuar: Your ex-husband.

Pamela: Yes.

Nardwuar: He described how in the mid-'70s the music moved from "fuck music" to "fuck you" music.

Pamela: Well, of course it did with The Sex Pistols and all that and it needed that. It was getting too, I don't know, lame. It needed a kick in the ass and they gave it the right kick in the ass.

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, what happened to groupiecentral.com. It was such a great website but now it's gone. Was it shut down because there was so much dirt on it?

Pamela: Yes. Bebe Buell had something to do with that. They were talking so much shit about her, I think. She really had something to do with shutting that down. I think she did. She complained so much.

Nardwuar: Pamela, how do you keep healthy? Because you've had some health scares in past years. How do you keep healthy?

Pamela: I had breast cancer, but I think it's all gone now. I went through surgery and radiation and everything. I just eat healthy and I exercise. I do yoga. I do Kundalini yoga, I have a lot of facials, I run, I do all kinds of things to stay healthy and I'm a vegetarian. I'm fifty-seven years old, so something's working!

Nardwuar: Pamela Des Barres, Ally Sheedy as Pamela Des Barres—wasn't Ally Sheedy going to be Pamela Des Barres in your book?

Pamela: She was the first person to option my book for a film and it just didn't happen. You know, she had the option for three years. I've been trying to get this movie made for eighteen years now, so it's gonna happen. It is gonna happen.

Spend the Night Together, is about her. It's pretty great.

Nardwuar: Pamela, winding up here, what was it like to be on Larry King? What's Larry King like?

Pamela: Oh, Larry King was so respectful. My first two TV appearances were on the *Today Show*, which is a very big show in America, and Larry King. So once I got those two out of the way, I could do anything. And Larry was wonderful. He talks to everyone the same way. Everything is very serious. All the stuff he asked me, he asked Jesse Jackson, who I had to follow one day. I've done Larry twice. It was great.

Nardwuar: Have you had any fun times with any politicians at all?

Pamela: No, but I think Bill Clinton is hot.

Nardwuar: And lastly here, Pamela Des Barres, what's your favorite Duran Duran side-project? Arcadia or Power Station?

Pamela: [laughs] Of course it's gotta be Power Station because my husband sang with them for a while. Replaced Robert Palmer. He got to do Live Aid. It was so cool to see him sing in front of a billion people.

Nardwuar: Anything else you wanna add to the people out there at all Pamela Des Barres?

Pamela: No. Thank you. I think you've covered it.

Nardwuar: Or people can buy the book!

Pamela: Please buy the book.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks so much Pamela Des Barres. Why should people care about *I'm with the Band* and Pamela Des Barres?

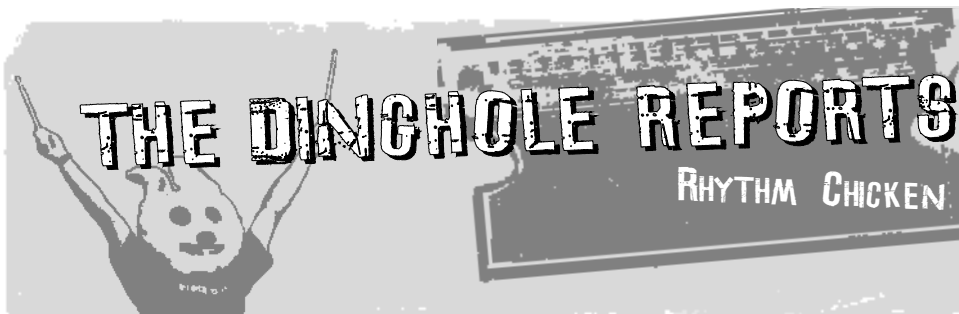
Pamela: Because the time I lived through in the '60s and early '70s, music was revolutionary. It's never gonna come again and I was right in the middle of it.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks so much Pamela Des Barres. Keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Pamela: Doot doo.

To hear this interview visit
www.nardwuar.com





“Cruising through Iowa cornfields, burning off gallons of precious gasoline, blaring rock music, and screaming along.”

WISCONSIN DORKS!

The Dinghole Reports
By the Rhythm Chicken
(commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

AMERICA! FUCK YEAH! U-S-A! U-S-A! LAND OF MAC-N-CHEESE, TRUCK-STOP COFFEE, AND THE PABST/BLATZ/SCHLITZ TRINITY! Oh say can I SEE... my yankee doodle DINGHOLE!!! Not only am I back in these here stateside STATES, but I'm back in the one state that MATTERS... WISCONSIN! ON WISCONSIN! This ain't no sunshine state! This ain't no "show me" state! This ain't no "land of Lincoln." THIS IS THE LAND OF OLD-MAN TAVERNS AND CHEESE CURDS!

(Hey! Welcome home, Rhythm Chicken! So, Poland deported you again, eh? -F.F.)

[Mr. Chicken! What a pleasant surprise! But, we weren't expecting you for a few more months, at least. Why the sudden return to your homeness? -Dr. S.]

Well, to tell the truth, Krakow was getting to be too much like America. The spring brought warm weather and the return of the largest throng of stupid American tourists, EVER! I couldn't go anywhere without hearing American English over my shoulder. *Oh, what a BEAUTIFUL town square! Daddy, can we ride the horse drawn carriage? Where can I get a USA Today? Oh, LOOK, Honey! They have McDonald's HERE, TOO! Well, where's the Starbucks? I don't even see ONE strip-mall! Oh, Honey, just give the poor beggar some of that Polish money. Oh, the guys back at the office would LOVE these beer prices!* The only area free of Americans was my poor, cement commie-block neighborhood, where I sought constant refuge.

My complete and utter dislike of American tourists boiled over my last night at my favorite Irish pub. A friend introduced me to an odd-looking fellow and said, "He's from Minnesota. You two should have a lot to talk about." Well, our conversation lasted about ten seconds until he PUKED VIOLENTLY into his hand! (American tourists are light-weights with Polish beer.) His puke landed on my pants leg, in my beer, and all over my shoes. He was soon whisked out by the bouncer and I was given rags to clean off the Minnesotan vomit. I was NOT happy. Then my buddy who introduced us comes over and

says, "So, how does it feel to be puked on by the singer of the Jayhawks?" So there you have it. I take a year of night classes to learn the Polish language. I quit my American job and move to Poland. I live in a friggin' concrete apartment in a Polish post-communist concrete jungle, and I end up getting puked on by the singer of the Jayhawks. Once again, truth is much stranger than fiction. I am now certain that American influence has saturated every unfortunate corner of the globe. I took it as a sign that I should return to Northern Wisconsin, to an area where I'm sure no Jayhawks will puke on me.

(MmmmwaaaHA-HA-HA! You got puked on by a JAYHAWK! In POLAND! -F.F.)

[That really is a most fascinating, story, Mr. Chicken! Now that you're back in Wisconsin maybe you can get puked on by one of the Bodeans, or something! -Dr. S.]

BUCK - BUCK - BUCKAW!!! SILENCE! If anyone's gonna be doing the puking, it's ME! I'M gonna puke on the BODEANS! I'M gonna puke on GARBAGE! I'M gonna puke on ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT! I'M gonna puke on friggin' TIMBUK-3! I'M gonna puke on gol'dang OFF BROADWAY! Then when I'm good and ready, I'll go to some nearby fairgrounds festival where the Jayhawks are playing to return the favor! REVENGE WILL BE MINE!

[You know, you could probably sell those pukey shoes on eBay. -Dr. S.]

Uh, yeah. So, I got my plane ticket and made the best out of my remaining time in Krakow. I got to know Krakow's own purveyors of that "Kalifornia Punk" sound, CF-98. They're a great bunch of guys (and girl) who kept me out in a downtown park drinking cheap beer 'til the eight AM beerfight! Then I fell asleep on the morning bus, drunk, and woke up lost in a quite unfamiliar neighborhood. Two days later, I got to see Apatia one last time. Apatia (Polish for "Apathy") are one of Poland's older punk outfits, being around since "former times." I also got to see Zlodzieje Rowerow (Bicycle Thieves) one last time. All these bands were great, and I hated to leave Poland, but my shoes were full of puke and Wisconsin was calling my name.

(Well, how does it feel to be an American again? -F.F.)

To tell the truth, I've been enjoying what I call TRUE American culture since my return. Some think American culture is baseball, hot-dogs, and apple pie. Not me. Upon returning to Wisconsin, I spent my first five days in Milwaukee inhaling a constant flow of greasy food and cheap beer! Then I spent one week settling back into my woodshed in Northern Wisconsin, drinking beer by the roadside while watching monster pickup trucks pass by. Then came the REAL re-introduction to American culture, the roadtrip! After a year of riding trains, trams, buses, and mini-buses around Eastern Europe, the all-American roadtrip across America's heartland was a real yankee-doodle shot in the arm!

There's nothing more American than two Wisconsin dorks cruising through Iowa cornfields, burning off gallons and gallons of precious gasoline, blaring rock music, and screaming along. The most intense case of culture shock hit me at our first Flying-J truck stop. That aisle of CB radio equipment! The shower stalls for truckers! The racks of trucker shirts and trucker denim! The racks of trucker tapes and CDs! The oil-stained, beer-bellied, pill-poppin', mesh-hat-wearing TRUCKERS! It was the furthest thing from Poland I'd ever seen. I was in shock. I was in awe. AMERICA! FUCK YEAH!

[Excuse me, Mr. America, but I hope you're getting around to this issue's Dinghole Report. *Razorcake* has become a full-fledged non-profit organization during your absence, and I don't know how much longer the powers-that-be can put up with your hogwash. -Dr. S.]

(Jeez! It's HOOSHWASH, you friggin' SLICK-SLACK! Heh... hogwash. I mean REALLY! -F.F.)

So, my old buddy Lightning Greg Steffke and I were heading down to Kansas City to be groomsmen in the wedding of our old friend Byron. Byron was once the singer of Green Bay's late-'80s hardcore faves, the Byrons. Byron is now the bass player for Kansas City's own Doris Henson, who do tours opening up for Billy Corgan and stuff like that. We knew it would be a rock wedding, but little did we know what was in store for us! We arrived in KC around midnight and Byron took us straight to DB Cooper's, a cheesy nearby '70s lounge that was straight from the *Love Boat*, only with Pabst on tap! We closed DB Cooper's and then sat up in Byron's antique guitar amp museum, drinking and geeking out 'til four AM.

The following day was the bachelor party! There's nothing more American than a good ol' bachelor party! This one consisted of nine semi-grown men hanging around a backyard drinking Blatz and Boulevard beer, scotch, and Polish vodka. There were also Wisconsin bratwurst, a whole mess of guitars laying around, two wigs, a fire pit, and a pile of toy cap guns! There were no strippers, well not until the nutsacks were hanging out around the fire later in the evening. With bellies full of bratwurst, KC BBQ, and gallons of various alcohols, we reveled in Byron's final days of bachelorhood.

The following day saw us all downing more KC BBQ and beers on various porches in the Westport neighborhood. Then we had to put on our straight faces for the wedding rehearsal and rehearsal dinner. However, that evening we were allowed to cut loose, yet again. We were treated to a riotous set by Rex Hobart and the Misery Boys at KC's hardcore shinkickin' honky-tonk saloon, Davey's Uptown Ramblers Club! Much like Bob's Country Bunker in *The Blues Brothers* movie, the audience threw their empties at the band, only with no chicken wire! Rex started out his set by saying into the microphone, "Did you ever have one of those mornings when the only time you feel good is when you're puking?" Seeing as how he downed most of the scotch himself at the bachelor party, he was just getting over his bachelor party hangover as rounds of shots were passed to the stage. We were all drinking like hounds as the wigs were passed around the club. This KC trip was fast approaching MAXIMUM HURRAY! That night ended with Lightning Greg and me sitting in the back of Byron's pick-up truck: two horribly sloppy, slurry drunks drinking three AM beers in the back of an old beat up pick-up truck, giggling in our wigs. THIS is my punk rock. This is my AMERICA. I was slowly adapting to American life.

(Okay, fine. So you had a nice little wedding trip to KC. You're morphing back into an American drunk. Now let's get to the RUCKUS! -F.F.)

SOOOOOO, the following day was the actual wedding. The morning and afternoon were spent downing coffee, beer, and quality Mexican food on Byron's porch. The only rivals to a down home American road-sit are the trucksit and the porchsit. Ah, America, where there's always a pleasant place to sit and drink your beer! So, the wedding and reception were at KC's luxurious Longview Mansion. This was, without a doubt, the most insanely high-production wedding I could ever imagine. I was feasting on the exquisite wedding dinner fit for a king, thinking about my last year in Poland, eating potatoes and cabbage. During the dinner there was a professional opera singer doing his version of Elvis songs with a Spanish guitar accompaniment. Then came the hour of normal wedding DJ activity and dancefloor antics.

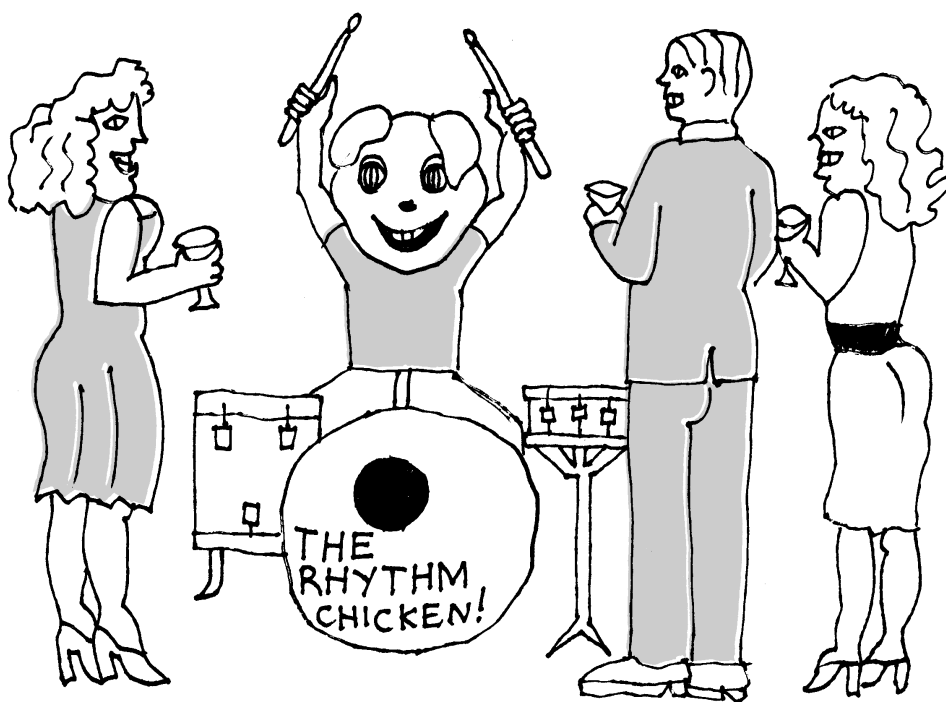


Illustration by Fose

Lightning Greg and I were rather sauced and started grabbing nutsacks!

Now, I've been to quite a few "rock weddings" where the bride and groom have the great idea of having a certain rock band play the reception. The end result is usually the immediate departure of the grandparents, aunts, uncles, and even the younger folks who just don't dig loud rock ruckus. Well, Doris Henson, Byron's band, is indeed a loud rock band. They started their loud rock music, and, to my surprise people, stayed. The young folks stayed! The old folks stayed! THEY WERE ALL DANCING! I was in complete shock when during their second loud rock number a conga line formed and the bride's MOTHER pulled me into the line! By the end of that song there was a two-hundred-person conga line wrapped around the Longview Mansion. Truth is SO stranger than fiction.

[Come on, Mr. Chicken! You only have two hundred thirty-seven words left to get to the RUCKUS! -Dr. S.]

Dinghole Report #72: Mansion Wedding Ruckus... IN AMERICA!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #374)

I never thought I'd see the rock wedding that worked, but here I was in a mansion watching Doris Henson rock the crowd of young and old alike! Well, Byron requested a Rhythm Chicken appearance. I was sure this would empty the high class joint. With enough Boulevard Wheat beers in my system, I had little holding me back from ruining the wedding. In my fancy suit and tie, I pulled on the Chickenhead and made my way to the drums already on the stage. With some concentration,

I was able to mount the makeshift Chickenkit and raise my wings to the curious wedding crowd. Much to my surprise, THEY ROARED! I hadn't even played one lousy drunken beat and they were already MINE! I unleashed the opening drumroll and then raised my wings yet again. THEY ROARED LOUDER! These wedding reception proceedings were defying all logic, yet I forged onward. I pounded out a most victorious return to American ruckus on American soil, in a friggin' MANSION, no less! The crowd was amassed about the stage and going BONKERS! I gave them a five minute taste of my Wisconsin-style ruckus rhythms and left them wanting more. I stood arm-in-arm with Byron for a few quick photos and was then briskly whisked backstage by Byron's bandmates, secret service-style.

The wedding reception slowed down and most went home scratching their heads after their first Rhythm Chicken sighting. Lightning Greg and I were rather sauced and started grabbing nutsacks! We returned to Byron's humble home to sit in his old pick-up truck and down more early morning beers. After two weeks of being back in this country, my Americanization process was completed.

(No, Chicken-nuts. You aren't an American again until YOU puke on the JAYHAWKS SINGER! -F.F.)

Patience, Francis. Patience.

-Rhythm Chicken
Rhythmchicken@hotmail.com





**“300+ locations
furiously slapping
tubes of processed
meat into enriched
buns as we speak...”**

DALE TACO

San Bernardino, California: More Commonly Known as the Inland Empire or “The 909”

This place was a spawning pool for more than a recent population explosion, methamphetamine labs, and ridiculously fucked hot summers. Yes, this area of Southern California was the birthplace of two of the biggest Mexican fast food joints in the nation: Taco Bell (Ca-Ca Smell) and the far superior Del Taco (or as I was aptly called in grade school, Dale Taco). I’ve held firm my strong preference with Del Taco, and not because of its namesake, but simply for the better quality of food. Well, So.Cal./honkified (Caucasian-influenced) Mexican food, if you will. If you’re one of “those people” who lean in favor towards Ca-Ca Smell, I don’t know what else to say other than enjoy your sporadic, feverish runs due to the foul, meat-like rectal grime they pass off as ground beef. And light a match after you’re finished in there, please.

Make no mistake here; there is *no* substitute for ass-kicking, authentic Mexican food, and, with a little perseverance, you’re probably going to find it, that is, unless you live in NYC (prove me wrong, Sis). But I’m talking fast food here folks, something I usually like to buy from a mom and pop burger joint. And when I’m itching for Mexican on the fly, Del Taco’s the dealer who’s been holding for some years now. In fact, they’re the only corporate grub chain (besides In-N-Out) that I’m fully backing, so go ahead and sue me, all you filthy, tree-hugging hippies.

Getting to the subject of its origins, Del Taco was actually a result linked to the rippling effect of the McDonald brothers opening their first hamburger joint in San Bernardino, located on 14th and E St. in 1940. The key thing Richard and Maurice McDonald brought to the table with their restaurant was the assembly line techniques that would ultimately shape the industry of drive-thrus to come. Too bad the McCompany didn’t see fit to keep the same consistent product over the years. For some reason, it feels as though I’m going back up clods of cold grease every time I eat there, so you can pretty much get the picture as to why I pass when it comes to Grimace and his pals.

Anyhow, here’s where things start to mutate, a virtual fast food cocoon in its pupa stage. It’s a couple of years after the end of WWII and, economically speaking, things are looking pretty solid, with America once again on the grow. The McDonald brothers had noticed that more and more young people were driving cars, so they took aim at this opportunity and converted their McDonald’s restaurant to a drive-in a few years prior.

Fast forward to 1948. Three young getters are sitting together inside a parked car at that drive-in, trying to figure out just how the McDonald brothers do that food thing they do. One of the three is Glenn Bell, who had opened a hot dog stand, also in San Bernardino. Glenn gets it in his mind that he could use the McDonald’s streamlined system to sell Mexican food, something he was quite fond of at the time. He first founded Taco Tia (which is still based out in San Berdo, last I heard). Of course, Glenn’s greatest triumph was getting his Taco Bell chain rolling, and the rest for him is history. We’ll get back to him in a second.

There were two others that parked at the drive in: Neal Baker, who was inspired to give it a go with his Baker’s burger chain, which is still in existence today with over thirty restaurants throughout the Inland Empire. The last guy in that car was John Gallardi. John launched his first Der Wienerschnitzel stand (supposedly named by Glenn’s wife) later on down the road in 1961, in Wilmington, CA, to be exact. John didn’t do too badly, either, as his hot dog chain went on to be the nation’s largest, with some 300+ locations furiously slapping tubes of processed meat into enriched buns as we speak (sounds like the doings of some video production company based in San Pornando, nearby pals Diego and Jenny). No offense to Gallardi, but nothing beats a done-up dog when visiting Chi-Town, in my opinion. As far as I know, there’s no Der Wienie in Chicago, and that’s a good thing. Why? Because even the thought of hitting up a Der Wienie in Chicago is like committing the same carnal sin of ordering Domino’s Pizza in NYC. That is, if you *prefer* to gnaw on a pizza crust-shaped piece of plastic that tastes like Lassie and Benji took turns doing dog wheelies across it.

Yes, yes, I know—what the fuck do my opinions, the three guys that I speak of above, or even McFucko’s (don’t get me started again with this company) have to do with (insert ascending harp sound) Del Taco? I’m getting there, hotshot. Patience! A tad bit of history usually explains why things end up the way they do, okay? The streamlined effectiveness of the McDonald brothers’ practices heavily influenced Bell, Baker, and Gallardi with their own fast food endeavors, and to a very lucrative degree, I might add. But like a whole lot of other businesses, being lucrative doesn’t always guarantee sustained product quality. Until someone constructs an actual working time machine, one will never be able to prove without a doubt that the food quality has taken it on the chin of said mentioned restaurants.

And speaking of sustained product quality, we get to the Del Taco portion of our program. Fast forward another handful of years to 1961. Taco business is gaining some momentum, and Glenn Bell sends one of his employees, Ed Hackbarth, to Barstow, CA to manage one of his three Taco Tia restaurants. That same Taco Tia is soon to become a Taco Bell, the new chain that Glenn creates starting with his first location opening up in Downey, CA in 1962. Within a few years, Hackbarth decides to set out on his own and opens up Casa Del Taco in Yermo, CA close by to the city of Barstow where he was managing. That little building is actually still standing in Yermo, right off the 15 freeway, a little down the road from a ‘50s-style diner.

Yvonne and I spotted it around last Christmas, cutting through a back road inside a tow truck that was taking us back to Barstow after our near-death collision with a stray van wheel on our way to Vegas. Driving by it was kind of strange, as it looked like it was open with a few people standing around the dusty front of it. I definitely want to check it out next time driving out that way, and encourage DT enthusiasts to do the same.

After buying the Barstow location (the 1st Ave. spot that still stands, not the Lenwood Exit location you see by the outlet malls) from Bell, Hackbarth shortened the name of his soon-to-be chain Del Taco, and he was soon on his way. Months after the 1st Ave. location, a second restaurant opened up



Illustration by Art Fuentes

in Corona, CA, only this time there was an increased sales addition built on: a drive-thru window that became a standard feature of the Del Taco chain. What's weird is that the passing of the torch even continued on during the infant stages of Del Taco.

Dick Naugle, an employee of Del Taco at this time, set out on his own to build the Naugles (or "Nalgas" as I called them) fast food Mexican chain in 1970 in Riverside, CA, not too far away from the whole San Berdo breeding ground. Harold Butler, who founded the small-portioned rip-off known as Denny's, bought Naugles from Naugle in 1971 when his chain consisted of only three restaurants. (Butler then built it up to 225 restaurants by 1985, when he sold the chain to Collins Food International. Naugles then merged with Del Taco in 1988 with those annoying "Viva Naugles! Viva Del Taco!" television spots.)

Two years later, Red-E-Foods Systems, Inc. was formed and Del Taco became the hot shit So.Cal. franchise to be part of. During 1972, an updated, twenty-eight seat restaurant opened in Newport Beach, CA: the largest Del Taco operating at that time. This location was the cat's ass of the modern, efficient fast-food outlet and became the design prototype for future Del Taco digs to come. In 1973, Red-E-Foods Systems, Inc. officially changed its name to Del Taco, Inc. This year of progress also marked the first year that Del Taco was opening restaurants at a rate of about one per month. Three years after changing the name to Del Taco, Inc. founders Ed Hackbarth and partner David

Jameson sold their stock to an independently held firm. The new management team set their sights on further expansion throughout Southern California. The 50th Del Taco restaurant opened in February, 1977 with the 100th restaurant opening just nineteen months later. Not bad for a former Ca-Ca Smell employee.

But things weren't to be so rosy after the chain was bought out by W.C. Grace in 1977. Turns out that there was some serious debt issues going on, and 1990 was going to prove to be the breaking point. Enter Brooklynite Kevin Moriarty. Moriarty, a former Burger King executive, came to Del Taco in 1990 as part of a bailout by General Electric's finance company. GE traded \$100 million in unpaid loans made to Del Taco's previous owners for control of the then-floundering chain. Moriarty's orders were pretty cut and dry: get GE out of that poopy loan. Del Taco was anchored down with more than heavy debts. It had confused marketing messages and a large menu that was biting off more burrito than it could chew. Moriarty recalled when Del Taco couldn't even pay its electric bills: "When I took it over, everything was wrong," says Moriarty, "It was madness."

Kevin still insists that on his first day with his new company he saw the opportunity and possibility. He placed Del Taco back on their feet with financial and operational handiwork and by slashing the menu back to its intended plan: affordable, hearty grub for folks like yours truly. By 1993, a planned bankruptcy got the GE monkey off of everyone's back, and Moriarty was now big

pimpin' as CEO and owner. And Del Taco was back in the ring with both fists swinging. "I was surprised that somebody would tackle the situation," says Ed Hackbarth, the chain's founder, whose family still owns eight Del Taco franchises.

In 1998, Kevin remained focused to start up some serious franchising, and at the time, Del Taco had just a few franchised stores. Today there are 194. Just this past April, a deal was done and Del Taco has been sold to Feltenstein and Powell, who operate as Sagittarius Brands from Nashville. They run the 600-store Captain D's fast food seafood chain they acquired last year. Feltenstein and Powell took on Del Taco because of the ever-increasing clout of private-equity investors (people who drool over older businesses such as fast food that spit out lots of cash). And plans to aggressively market the chain to uncharted U.S. territories are in the works.

All I hope is that they don't go changing anything too drastically, especially the food consistency. Like most things in life: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. And for the record, Del Taco Dan is pretty frickin' cool in person, so please don't dick with him if you happen to see him around. Trust me, it won't be the first time he's heard some stupid-ass out in public, trying to be clever about him and a taco, so do 'em the kindness and go punch the Hamburglar in the breadbasket instead. It's what he gets for being a thief, anyway, the striped, sticky-fingered creep.

I'm Against It
—Designated Dale



WON TON NOT NOW

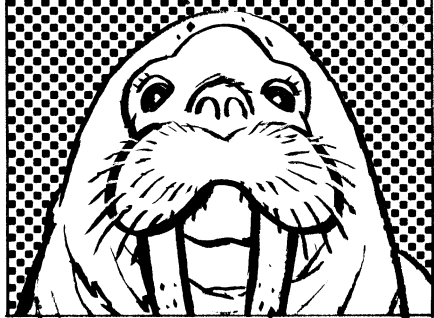
BY KIYOSHI NAKAZAWA
YOU ARE A SPECIAL SNOWFLAKE



ONE OF MY EARLIEST SEXUAL MEMORIES IS FROM WHEN I WAS WATCHING T.V.. I WAS ABOUT 6 OR 7 YEARS OLD.



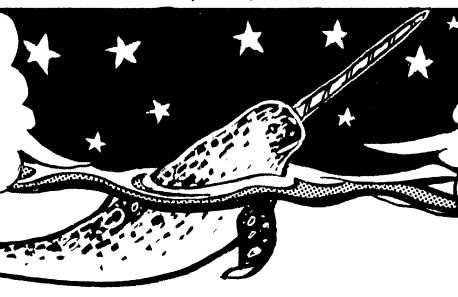
IT WAS AN OLD ANTHONY QUINN MOVIE ABOUT THE AMAZING INUIT ESKIMOS.



KEEP IN MIND I DID NOT GROW UP WITH PORN READILY ACCESSIBLE.



I VIVIDLY REMEMBER GETTING TOTALLY TURNED ON (DARE I SAY I GOT A BONER) BY ONE SCENE IN PARTICULAR.



QUINN'S HOT AND MUCH YOUNGER ESKIMO WIFE TOOK HIS COLD FEET BENEATH HER ANIMAL FUR COAT ONTO HER BARE BOSOMS TO WARM THE BARKING DOGS.

SOMEHOW I UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS ACT WAS MORE THAN JUST SOME INUIT SURVIVAL TECHNIQUE. IT WAS AN ACT OF ULTIMATE SEXUAL FULFILLMENT. FOR SURE.



SHE DIDN'T SEEM VERY HAPPY IN THE SCENE.

I BUMPED INTO MY OLDER BROTHER AFTER T.V. TIME.



HE PROCEEDED TO HIT ME.



TO THIS DAY I CAN SEE THAT ESKIMO WOMAN WARMING THOSE ICY FEET AND I CAN HEAR ANTHONY QUINN SAY



OH YEAH BABY. GIVE ME WHAT I LIKE !!



SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

"The interesting thing I found in these talk show fiascos is the abuse of statistics."

Laughing at the Ignorance

I once heard somewhere that we, as a nation, were heading for an inevitable race war. It was supposed to happen sooner than later, and it was to be between blacks and whites. I remember turning my nose up at the idea, because, really, do we have time for that kind of war? Lately, however, racism is on the front page of the newspaper almost daily, only it's not black and white, it's now brown and political white. Now the only reason I'm touching this bottle labeled poison is that many of my friends and acquaintances are of Hispanic decent, and the discussions have been interesting.

Everyone is up to date on the fact that the U.S. government is trying its best to do something about the illegal immigrant issue, and because of it, there have been large marches to protest them. It is in these marches that things start to break down. To start with, when making a point to stay in a country that is affording one a better quality of life, do not wave the flag of another country. I have some Scottish in me, but I don't have a giant flag of Scotland waving from my truck. Okay, you got me. I'm a mutt, but I can't wave all those flags at once. My point, however, is that I was born in Norwalk, lived in La Mirada, and now reside in Artesia, which I think makes me a Californian, and lastly, a United States citizen, so, like it or not, I pledge to the stars and stripes. My country affords me that. Now, if the government wanted to send me back to Europe, my complaining for wanting to stay would be done with the U.S. flag.

This now brings up the conversation that a friend at work had with his mother. My friend, who I would say is of Mexican decent, argued with his mother that he was not Mexican, that he was indeed American, even Pico Riveraian. Apparently, this was a heated debate in his household. Is it at this point that we conclude that ethnicity is looked at differently by generations? I'm not sure.

I have another problem with the marches: the fact that a large portion of the protesters were high school kids who were joining the rallies merely to cut classes. We had a couple at work tell us that they cut out just because they could get out of school and that they didn't really know any of the reasons for the protest. Okay, stop! In debate, everyone at the table should be well informed. When the politicians see and hear these things, they're laughing at the ignorance.

Here is where we stand: if they see you waving the flag of another country, they're not going to help you. Secondly, if the crowd is full of non-voters, those politicians are really not going to help you out anyway. Hear me out. I'm not a racist. I'm just not big on ignorant people. I don't want to kick anybody back to some third world country—those places are brutal—but do something to make me want to help you out.

Recently, I have been on vacation, one of those "stay around the house and attempt to tidy up and get things done" kind of vacations. One of my tasks has been to convert old VHS tapes to DVD. In doing so, I came across a copy of the *Geraldo* show in which he entertains some Aryan types and the show gets out of control to the point of a bloody, cut-up nose. If you're going to invite the opposition and not keep them in a cage, don't taunt them and repeatedly poke them with a broomstick. You have to hear someone out before you can pass judgment.

In my digging I also found an airing of *The Morton Downey Jr. Show* in which he berates David Duke. If you remember, Duke was a Presidential hopeful that used to be a head guy in the KKK. In the same show Mort has the tandem of Tom and John Metzger—the younger of which was involved in the Geraldo fight—and they argue about welfare and race issues. The interesting thing I found in these talk show fiascos is the abuse of statistics. Who is on welfare? Are they black? Hispanic? White? Asian? Who is the minority skinhead? Is it the punk, ska, or Rasta?

Here at the house we get a magazine called the *Intelligence Report* and it contains statistics on hate groups in general. In one chart I was able to see that every state has some hate group actively working their agendas, and most states have several—and those are the groups they know about. In one of the articles it explained that in one group several of the members were on trial for killing their own. That seems interesting. Killing their own? I heard where Stalin did something like that and I've read recently that several of the African states are doing this. Although, it seems that in the modern world it's more empowering to brutally torture someone before killing them.

Where do I stand on the issue of race relations? I'm not sure. I can get hot when I drive

my truck into the parking lot at Home Depot and several men come racing at me, looking for work, misconstruing my owning a truck for maybe being in construction, but for the most part, the job probably wouldn't get done if it weren't for them. Show me a U.S. citizen who would work in the fields for less than minimum wage. And, if that wage was higher, would you pay seven dollars a head for lettuce? The issue is more delicate than the national anthem in español, and this is why I sit high on the fence on this issue. Yes, something has to be done, but it has to benefit all sides. Am I the one with an answer? Hell no! All I'm asking is that before there's a big production, sit down and think about what you're going to say and how you're going to do it. Thanks for listening.

—Gary

THE TICK (DAYS OF DRAMA)
\$3.95 U.S.

The Tick keeps on going, thanks in part to the writing team of Clay and Susan Griffith. Ben Edlund's character has endured some ups and downs over the course of its history. Most of the downs were due to some shaky story lines and some humorless writing. The other problem is that the comic is non-traditional in the way that it is put out, meaning that it is numbered by story concept rather than a straight numbering system. It would be easier to find back issue number twenty-six than *Days of Drama* four. All that aside, I like the new comic except for the new slimed-down Arthur. When Arthur was dumpy, he was more likable and it added a clumsy humor, like a Chris Farley kind of thing. I really like that this story line doesn't add to the large list of abundant superheroes and gives us the old ones like Running Man, Caped Cod, and Barry. Now, as for villains, this story has the Devil heading a group of cloaked, role-playing nerds that are trying to take over the city. The concept is very similar to the Ninja Hedge, from the first series of comics. And who doesn't love the Ninja Hedge? What I really love in this series are the one-liners that, for awhile, were few and far between. For example: "Let those who join the dark lord live a thousand years bathed in milk and honey. If you're lactose

**This is the
curse of
comics.**

**They keep us
buying them.**



The Tick

intolerant—extra honey for you!” Come on, that’s funny. Now, if you can get through all of New England Press’s back issue and collectibles advertising, I think that this new writing team will come real close to laughing readers out of their seats. Hell, what am I saying? It’s the Tick for god’s sake; of course it’s going to be funny. (New England Press, 732 Washington St., Norwood, MA 02062, www.newenglandcomics.com)

BUG GIRL #2

\$2.95 U.S., \$4.50 Can.

by George Dondero and Ruben Deluna

One would think that taking a human and shrinking them down to bug size would make for a somewhat *The Fly* type story, but this one is actually fun to read. The cover was kind of dark and morbid, which is why I made the purchase, but I’ve got to say that the story line is almost wicked. The little girl (the bug killer) is captured and shrunk. She is then sentenced to death, but talks her way out by telling them she can get them to an eternal food source in the pantry of the house. The trip begins and they must navigate past spiders, the cat, humans, and poison traps. Eventually, they reach her room to release the bugs she had captured and kept in jars. Upon reaching the room, they find that the cat knocked all

the jars over and that all the bugs have gone mad. Here ends issue two. I know: what the hell happens? Well, that is why we have to go out and buy issue three. This is the curse of comics. They keep us buying them. The inks are really well done and add to the creepiness of the comic. Let’s just say if you were one of those kids who collected or tortured bugs as a kid, you’ll love this book, or maybe you’ll feel guilty and throw it in the trash. Either way; read this and have some fun. (Office of Publication, 1859 Main St. #2, Napa, CA 94559, www.moronik.com, www.rubendeluna.com)

CRICKETS

\$3.95 U.S., \$4.95 Can.

by Sammy Harkham

I read this over and over and all I can come up with is that it is morbidly bizarre but shockingly entertaining. The story is called “Black Death” and it’s a pretty accurate title, except I think the title refers to the fact that the entire killing takes place at night. Most of the story is visual with no words spoken. For instance, at the start, we see panel after panel of a man running while being pelted by a barrage of arrows. He falls down while somehow catching his pant leg on fire, gets back up, runs off of a cliff, falling through tree branches, until he finally comes to rest on the ground up

against a tree where a final arrow pierces his eye for good measure. The only sound is some laughing just before the arrow hits his eye. From this point, we are introduced to a large, non-speaking man who chases a chicken that leads him to the arrow-in-the-eye man. We then skip to a father and son eating squirrel by the campfire at night and the two are discussing the trip they are on, to bury a five-year-old, with long pauses of silence in between. At some point in the black they hear a hello. The father, drawing his gun, calls warning to the voice, and who should it be but arrow man and his bald friend. A scuffle ensues in which the father shoots at the bald guy and the bullet doesn’t even scratch him, so the father and son assume that the two are a wizard and golem team. Assuming that the man with an arrow in his eye is a wizard, they ask him to resurrect the young dead boy. When arrow head tells them he’s not a wizard, another fight breaks out between the two and the boy mistakenly shoots the father. The big bald guy picks the son up by the head, killing the son. End of story. So you tell me: is this one bizarre story, or what? (Drawn and Quarterly, PO Box 48056 Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2V458, www.drawnandquarterly.com)





A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG SEAN CARSWELL

"We have a living, breathing scene that exists for the music and for the people who love it."

ANOTHER ANTHEM FOR THE DISENFRANCHISED

San Pedro is a good place to go when you're looking for answers. It's at the end of L.A.'s craziest freeway, south of and central to South Central. It's a tangled mess of dirty water and industry, glowing even at night in the toxic orange lights of the Port of Los Angeles. In a way, Pedro is America. It's where the dock workers went on strike a few years ago and the President forced them back to work, arguing that America doesn't run without the Port of Los Angeles. Of course, no one asked the question: if America really depends so much on these guys, why don't we give them a raise? America doesn't really depend on the President. Positions of power here are like the mythical hydra. Cut off Bush's head and another corporate shill will sprout in his place. Cut off the salary of the Pedro dock worker, and we're all fucked.

But these weren't the answers I was looking for when I headed down to Pedro last week.

I went down there for two reasons. First, because Toys That Kill were playing with The Marked Men. A few weeks earlier, Toys That Kill played their record release show. I missed that one. The next day, though, I was hanging out with *Razorcake* columnist Jim Ruland and writer Roy Kesey. They'd both been to the show. It was the first ever punk show for Roy. He kept talking about it. He told me, "It wasn't what I expected punk rock to be. No mohawks. No leather." And: "It was the friendliest mosh pit. Kids would knock the shit out of each other, but stop and help up anyone who fell down." I knew this about the show. I didn't have to drive down to see it. Still, to hear Roy talk about it, to hear the amazement in his voice, felt like a clue of some sort. Another clue came from Ruland, when he talked about Toys That Kill playing the anthems of the gutted San Pedro kids. I listened to Roy and Ruland and kicked myself for missing that Toys That Kill show.

I didn't miss the one with The Marked Men, though. Like I said, I was down there searching for answers. Or at least for a little insight. Because I'm worried about kids today. I'll explain.

In typical Pedro fashion, venues changed on the day of the show. There was no listing for the show in any of the weeklies or online. The venue switch was publicized strictly by word of mouth. Still, word

of mouth spread. Thirty or forty kids were milling around the venue before the first band had even played.

I forgot the first band's name. They were from Boston. They weren't bad, but they weren't that good, either. Halfway through their set, the singer said, "I'm freaking out to be playing in the home of the Minutemen." I was thinking, no shit; you're coppin' more riffs off of Mike Watt than Mike Watt cops. I headed across the street to get a tall boy and brown paper bag to hold it in.

It was about ten o'clock on a Friday night. The local drug store was packed. It was obviously the spot where the locals got their booze. Different groups of kids milled around. I didn't recognize faces, but I recognized the scenes: the goth girl with her pasty white skin and black eyeliner; the chicano metalhead who looked straight out of 1986; the mohawked punk with his pegged black jeans (who wasn't headed over to the TTK show, by the way); the sad indie rockers with their Morrissey shirts; the hip hop kids; the dirty hippies; and of course me and the TTK refugees in our black T-shirts and jeans. Nothing new there. Nothing too strange except that I realized that every group of kids I saw was in their early twenties and every scene they represented—goth, metal, punk, hip hop, indie rock, hippie—was in its twenties or older, too. These kids were dressed in the uniforms that their rebellious parents could've worn. And there's something fundamentally off about that. It made me wonder where the next great youth movement was going to come from or if it would come at all.

Now, I know I'm basing my judgments on these kids solely on their clothes. I know that there's more to a subculture than their clothes. I also know it seems like I'm looking down on these kids like the grumpy old man saying, "Goddamn it, get your own scene." That's not my intention. Because I don't care. Dress however you want. Rebel however you want.

What concerns me about all these kids, though, is the time period when the fashions of scenes seemed to freeze. The mid-to-late eighties. It was exactly when corporations started to realize how to capitalize on youth movements, how to figure out exactly what the hot new trends were and how to repack-age these trends so that it could be the cor-

porations selling these trends back to the kids who started them. Over the past ten years, with the help of cool hunting and data mining, this repackaging and co-opting of youth has only gotten quicker and more effective. Even the latest trend to promote independent music, Myspace, was purchased by NewsCorp earlier this year. NewsCorp (the media giant that owns Twentieth Century Fox and Fox News) paid \$580 million for Myspace. They hope to recoup a lot of that money by selling demographic information from Myspace pages to advertisers. Take a second to think about that. Remember that old Jawbreaker line? "Selling kids to other kids."

This repackaging of trends, this drive to sell our own culture to us, is having exactly the effect that you'd expect. Our music, our scenes, our lives become stagnant and superficial. It can get depressing. So I bought my tall boy and headed back to the show.

The Marked Men were setting up when I got back there. There was no sound man or sound board. Just a P.A. and a guy standing at the front of the stage, fiddling knobs. The venue was less of a venue and more of an abandoned space at the end of a rundown commercial building. Plaster flaked off the walls. The ceiling had holes in it. The floor was bare concrete. No advertisements hung on the wall. There was no doorman, no security. I don't think anyone was actually working there. The only people dealing with money in the joint were the bands selling merch and the guy passing the hat for the bands. Nothing but the music and the people who came to hear it.

Enter The Marked Men. They're definitely one of my favorites. When their album *On the Outside* came out a couple of years ago, it got stuck in my truck's CD player. No malfunction on the part of the stereo; I just couldn't bring myself to take the CD out. And since I pretty much only drove that summer when I was driving to the beach to go surfing, that album is etched in my mind as a sign of good things to come. They were touring this time to promote their new album, *Fix My Brain*. I hadn't heard the new one yet. From the opening chords of their set, from the pure energy and excitement, from the kids swirling around me, going nuts, I knew The Marked Men were on to more good things to come.



Toys That Kill, rulin', in Pedro • photo by Todd Taylor

There's more to The Marked Men, though. They come out of a scene in Denton, Texas, that's given birth to a few bands whose albums get stuck in my stereo: the Chop Sakis, The Riverboat Gamblers, High Tension Wires, The Reds. Now, granted, a lot of those bands have overlapping members, so the music scene in Denton may be smaller than I imagine. And, granted, The Riverboat Gamblers were on the Warped Tour last summer and, considering their amazing new album and live show, they are poised to be the next big thing, the next trend to be co-opted and sold back to us. That hasn't happened yet, though. We're still in that pure time when the Denton bands and their music have developed organically. It's still a music scene that exists because we love the music, not because someone is trying to sell it to us. In a lot of ways, this was the perfect place to see The Marked Men—a word-of-mouth show in an abandoned commercial space. Nothing for sale but the stuff the bands sell to keep themselves on the road.

Up next was Toys That Kill. TTK is the band I've seen play the most in the past five years. Part of this has to do with the bands that TTK bring to town and play with. I guess I have pretty similar tastes in music with these guys. I have to thank them for bringing me shows with Dick Army, The Knockout Pills, Shark Pants, Fleshies, The

Arrivals, Tiltwheel, The Thumbs. The list goes on. Recess Records, the label that TTK singer/guitarist Todd runs, has put out albums by bands that have graced four *Razorcake* covers.

Most of the reason I've seen TTK so much has to do with how much fun it is to be at their shows. They have a following, a core audience that's always there. I don't know what to call this group. They're loyal as Deadheads and drunk as dock workers on their days off. I don't know any of them personally, though I've seen them at dozens of shows. It's enough just to watch them, to feel their energy, to see them singing along to every word of songs that are on an album that was released two weeks earlier.

And again, down here in Pedro we have something that mirrors Denton. We have a living, breathing scene that exists for the music and for the people who love it. It's not flashy. It's not what Roy Kesey expected to see at a punk rock show. And it's not really punk rock in the original sense. It's grown and evolved miles away from the original movement. The bands aping the old heroes draw yawns. The bands finding new ways to make high energy rock'n'roll etch the signs of good things to come.

So, yes, it's a little bit of optimism. A show untouched by corporate culture. Anthems for the young and disenfranchised played in a way that they can't be

repackaged and sold back to us. It's a beautiful thing.

But it's not that simple.

On the long drive home, across the concrete expanse of L.A., I kept thinking about it. Shows like The Marked Men/Toys That Kill one are beautiful things. They're connected to larger things, other scenes in other towns that are doing the same type of things. They're signs of a living, breathing culture that exists because we want it, because we love it, not because someone wants to sell it to us. But when the sweat dries and the excitement wears off and it's just me in my truck, rolling down another freeway, immersed in the cloned towns that engulf America like the repeating backdrop in a cartoon, I have to wonder if these little oases of culture can ever irrigate this dry society we live in, or is it just a matter of time until someone buys the oasis and sells us the water?

—Sean Carswell

This column is dedicated to the demise of one of my all-time favorite bookstores: Confounded Books in Seattle. Thanks to Brad Beshaw for the years he put into Confounded and all his hard work. I already miss that place.



GREG PALAST

AMERICAN REPORTER GREG PALAST HAS BROKEN SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT NEWS STORIES IN RECENT YEARS.

HIS WORK REACHES A LARGE, GLOBAL AUDIENCE THROUGH THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (BBC), BUT CORPORATE-OWNED MEDIA OUTLETS IN THE UNITED STATES GENERALLY IGNORE HIM. IN 2004, PALAST TOLD *RAZORCAKE* READERS ABOUT HIS INVESTIGATIONS INTO POLITICAL AND CORPORATE CORRUPTION, ESPECIALLY HIS REPORT THAT IN 2000 GOVERNOR JEB BUSH (R., FLORIDA) PURGED TENS OF THOUSANDS OF BLACK AND DEMOCRATIC VOTERS FROM HIS STATE'S ELECTORAL ROLLS BY FALSELY LISTING THEM AS FELONS. THE VETERAN JOURNALIST NOW TELLS CHRIS PEPUS ABOUT SOME OF HIS OTHER DISCOVERIES, INCLUDING THE STORY BEHIND THE CALIFORNIA POWER CRISIS, THE 2003 RECALL ELECTION, AND GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER'S ENERGY POLICY. PALAST ALSO TALKS ABOUT THE REASONS FOR THE IRAQ WAR, THE CAUSES OF HIGH GASOLINE PRICES, AND OTHER TOPICS COVERED IN HIS NEW BOOK, *ARMED MADHOUSE*.

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS PEPUS • ILLUSTRATION / DESIGN BY KEITH ROSSON AND TODD TAYLOR

Chris Pepus: In 2001, you wrote that energy companies such as Enron deliberately created the California power crisis. How did they do it?

Greg Palast: They gamed the system. I'll give you an example. Enron sold 500 megawatts of power to Southern California on one hot day. Now, they sold it over a line that could only handle 15 megawatts of power—if you pour 500 megawatts of power into that line, it burns up. As soon as the engineers saw that, they realized the juice wasn't coming in: panic, freak-out, blackouts ready to roll in. So they say, "We have to get the power from somewhere else." They will pay anything. The price of power jumps 10,000% in an hour—10,000%. And who's there to sell it? It's Enron, from another power plant of theirs. This is some of the gaming of the system, along with tricks like kilowatt laundering. When they finally started getting caught for fixing the casino called

the power market, President Clinton said that these people may not charge an unlimited amount above their actual costs within the state of California. The result was that these guys pretended to buy the power from out of state. They would send the juice out of state and then send it back across the border. It was just like any money-laundering operation, but it was kilowatt laundering.

The games were astonishing, but what's really horrible is that you've got a guy like (former Enron chairman) Ken Lay, who is not on trial for his real crimes. These were the real crimes: wringing \$9.6 billion out of California consumers' pockets. That number comes to me from the California Power Association. This is the money that was wrung out of California ratepayers in just six months of manipulation. Ken Lay is not on trial for that, and the reason is that under federal law, the courts have to defer to the reg-



ulatory agencies. The regulatory agency is called the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Who is running the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission? First there was a guy named (Patrick) Wood; now there is a guy named (Joseph) Kelliher. Who suggested that the top cop in electricity should be Wood? The name is Ken Lay. You'll see in my new book, *Armed Madhouse*, I actually have the letter from "Kenny Boy" Lay to Little George, our president, first requesting that (Wood) be made head of the Texas utility commission when George W. Bush was governor, and then later Lay moved his Texas puppet up to the federal commission. So, in other words, Ken Lay has done it one better than Al Capone. Capone used to have to buy the judges. Lay appointed them. If Ken Lay goes down, it's like Capone going down for not doing his taxes. Ken Lay is charged with stock manipulation. Who do they care about? They don't care about the fact that the average California electricity customer was ripped off completely. It's all about the guys who bought the stock, the guys who are funding the con.

Pepus: How does Governor Schwarzenegger fit into all this?

Palast: Back in a hotel room in May of 2001—the Peninsula Hotel, Beverly Hills—Ken Lay and a muscleman named Arnie Schwarzenegger and a few other power pirates and movers and shakers got together. They had themselves a problem, because there was a milquetoast governor of California named Gray Davis who suddenly found his cajones and said, "I'm gonna bust these guys." He started calling Ken Lay and his ilk "power pirates." It's not just Enron. You have to understand there was not just one pirate ship out there. We're talking Enron, Reliant, Texas Utilities, Dynegy, all these characters out of Houston. They all had these buildings, by the way, on one single corner of Houston. The governor said, "This has got to end." (The state) started filing lawsuits, which would get around the fixed judges on the regulatory commission. So they had to get rid of Gray Davis and, lo and behold, he was recalled and you ended up with the tinker-toy terminator.

So Schwarzenegger comes in. The state of California was ripped off blind, and what does he do? He does exactly what Ken Lay was suggesting that he do in that secret meeting in the Peninsula Hotel, which is to make an agreement with Enron and the other power pirates to let them pay a nominal sum to settle these costs. They paid less than 20 cents on the dollar—what you'd tip a waitress. It was game over, except for Enron, which, by declaring bankruptcy, paid nada back to the consumers. So Mr. Tough Guy let these guys walk with about \$8 billion in their pockets of California's money. Now what's even worse: the new head of the federal agency was also picked by Ken Lay.

Pepus: Now, what about the 1996 deregulation in California that preceded the power crisis? How did the new policy affect these events?

Palast: Where do they come up with "deregulation"? It's decriminalization of electricity theft. We use this weird term, deregulation. People think, what is that? It's a really academic term. It means that these pirates can charge you whatever they want. They've got you by the balls. There's one line going into your house. They pretend that there is a market, but a few guys from the power companies literally sit around in hotel rooms and conspire to fix the price. It's so easy to fix this so-called market.

Pepus: What do you think are the chances of another power crisis in California?

Palast: One hundred percent. They have to wait for the right political situation. Remember, this is a political issue. It's not about lack of power. When it goes dark, it's because they did it on purpose. I do know that, for example, Reliant Corporation, which is one of the aliases of old Houston Power and Light—Ken Lay really has nothing on them.

They're even better, because none of their guys have gone to the can yet. These characters simply shut down some power plants in southern California and then they have power to send you from northern California when everyone goes into panic. There's no great genius in this stuff. It's very simple.

Pepus: Speaking of energy issues, what's causing high gas prices?

Palast: Read the book, man. [laughs]


Pepus: It's on its way here.

Palast: I have a whole chapter called "The Flow." What's happened is that we have Team Cheney matching up with Team Abdullah (king of Saudi Arabia). Basically, we have a Houston-Saudi combine, which has decided to strengthen OPEC.¹ I was able to get my hands on a 323-page document from inside the U.S. State Department, which was the plan for Iraq's oil. It took two goddamn years to find this evil little document. It was actually put together by James Baker, who is the lawyer for Exxon and the Saudi Arabian government—and the lawyer for the Republican Party. So I was able to get this document. When I say "I" by the way, I do have a team. There are eleven people who do this work with me. We got this 323-page document and, at its core, it was a plan to make sure that Iraq gets in line and strengthens OPEC or, as they said, "enhances its relationship with OPEC." The big panic was that Saddam Hussein was jerking the oil markets up and down. A lot of my friends will be stunned to find out what I found. We did not go into Iraq to get Iraq's oil. We went into Iraq to make sure that we *didn't* get Iraq's oil. The



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¹ Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the group that fixes international oil prices. Member nations include Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq.



last thing that the oil companies wanted, and Mr. Cheney wanted, was more oil in the market. Under Bill Clinton, oil was eighteen bucks a barrel, man. It was down on the floor and these guys out of Houston did not like that one little bit. So, they have to shut off the spigots, and one of the biggest spigots is in Iraq. I go through the history of the suppression of Iraq's production by big oil. It's a long, long history. Dick Cheney does not want people to fill up their Hummers cheaply. They're not unhappy with high oil prices. That may seem obvious to say, but someone's got to say it.

Now, they had a plan to make sure that oil would stay nice and high. That meant several things. One was that Iraq stays a good member of OPEC—that was the main goal for James Baker and oil company executives. By the way, they had to defeat the neocon(servative)s,ⁱⁱ who really did want to open up the oil spigots and bust Saudi Arabia. People think that the neocons have power. No. Paul Wolfowitz (Deputy Secretary of Defense, 2001-05), his ass was kicked out to the World Bank, where now he gets to give loans to chicken farmers in Bangladesh. That's a demotion for these guys. Neocons don't have any authority any more in this administration. It is definitely big oil. ("Neoconservative" is a term that refers to Republicans who support extensive use of military force to spread right-wing economic theory around the world. Many Bush administration officials, especially those in the Department of Defense, used to work for neoconservative think tanks in Washington. Paul Wolfowitz was one of the leaders of the neocons and in 2002-03 he played a large role in the administration's effort to build support in Congress for an invasion of Iraq.)

Pepus: Were there any oil company executives who supported the neo-conservatives' plan to privatize and sell off Iraqi oil resources?

Palast: No. The neocons had this grand plan. Oil fields were just one of the assets of Iraq. They were going to sell off all of Iraq's banks, all of Iraq's electric systems—everything for sale. I also got my hands on that plan. It's a 101-page document. By the way, please tell your readers: if you've got an inside document, please send it to me. But we got this plan that said we were going to sell off everything. I showed it to General Jay Garner (formerly the Chief U.S. Administrator in Iraq). He said you can't sell off all of Iraq's assets, because you will create an insurgency. He put it in his very calm terms and said, "That's just one fight you don't want to take on."

Pepus: In one of your BBC reports, you mentioned that this privatization plan actually fuelled the insurgency. Could you talk about that?

Palast: Yes, one of the problems was that you had a big mouth named Ibrahim Bahr al-Ulum, the son of a big-shot sheik. He was brought in as oil minister and he started shooting his mouth off about the plan for privatizing the oil fields. Suddenly you've got thousands of guys with Kalashnikov (rifles) and semtex (explosives) saying, "Screw you." You have to understand, as one of the oil-industry guys said, "This big mouth forgot that Iraqis think of oil as Allah's gift to Iraq." You start talking about piecing it all out to your cronies and they'd rather blow you up first.

So that caused a blow-up but no one was more incensed about the plan than big oil. Those guys started saying, "Wait a minute. You're not piecing all this stuff off to some of your cronies. This is the property of

Shell Oil, Exxon, Conoco, etc." So the ex-CEO of Shell flies into Baghdad. His name is Philip Carroll. They sent him in a C-17 (transport plane), like that's how big he is. And he gets off the plane and he basically tells Paul Bremer (Chief U.S. Administrator in Iraq after Gen. Garner was fired), "Cut the shit, baby." Bremer was getting rid of the Ba'athists,ⁱⁱⁱ but as far as Philip Carroll was concerned, he didn't care if the Ba'athists had killed Kurdish^{iv} babies with their bare hands; they knew the oil industry. They had dealt with Shell Oil very well. So they bring the Ba'athists back in and they get rid of all these plans for piecing off the oil fields. Now, does that mean that big oil doesn't want the oil fields? No. The way big oil works, they get what are called "production-sharing agreements." They let the Iraqis pretend that they own the oil. They have agreements where they get the lion's share of the take. There's no bidding. You just cut your deal with Shell, with Exxon. The plan was put into place to have technically state-owned oil, but with these production-sharing agreements.

George Bush is pleased with this system. He is happy with \$3-a-gallon gasoline. He's happy that Exxon is earning ten billion a quarter. Now, the American people are finally saying, "Why are we paying three bucks a gallon for gas?" But we're still getting the media hand-job on why that's happened. I saw the *New York Times* yesterday, front-page story, saying that oil prices are high because of the oil-futures markets, speculators. Normally the *New York Times* doesn't go after speculators. In fact, it's a cover for the oil companies. No one is talking about King Abdullah and OPEC. It's like the Saudis are somehow victims. They're earning a billion bucks a day, and they're selling oil for \$75 a barrel and it costs \$2 a barrel to lift out of the sand.

Pepus: Getting back to Cheney and Bush, what role did the two of them play in this battle between the neocons and big oil? It seems that they were for privatization and then they backed off it, or was it more cynical than that?

Palast: Yes, it's so much more cynical than that. Dick Cheney is the leader of the neocon faction and he's the leader of their hated nemesis, the oil faction. This is the most cynical fucking operation. It's like putting spiders in a bottle and watching them eat each other. That's what Cheney does. It's just brilliant, because there are political advantages to keeping these guys at each other's throats. Now, both of these factions, they don't mind how much of your blood is spilled, how much of your bank account gets sucked dry. But it's very important to Cheney that he keeps them on their toes, because it keeps them beholden to him. He has been manipulating both factions. But ultimately, big oil always wins. Never bet against the Saudis and big oil.

Pepus: What are some of the other stories that you include in your new book, *Armed Madhouse*?

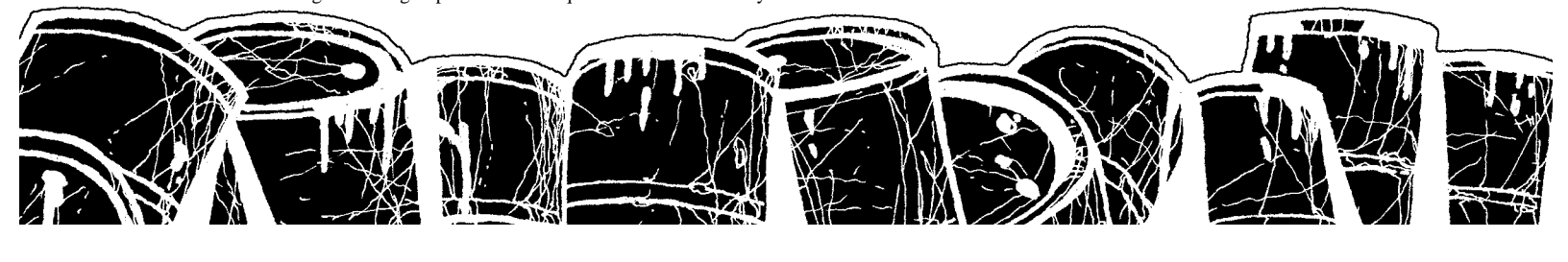
Palast: Well, for instance, there's the chapter I call "The Scheme to Steal '08." I got this stat from the elections officials: in 2004, three million ballots were rejected, just chucked in the trash. So, I decided to go in and look at whose ballots they were. In the swing state of New Mexico, 89% of the rejected ballots were cast in minority precincts. I actually went to Native American reservations where there were precincts that showed no

ⁱⁱ "Neoconservative" is a term originally used to refer to conservatives who had once been liberals. Today, the word mainly refers to Republicans who support extensive use of military force to spread right-wing economic theory around the world.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Ba'ath Party was Saddam Hussein's political party.

^{iv} The Kurds are the largest ethnic group in northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey.

Many Kurds would like to have their own country, and the Iraqi and Turkish governments have resorted to massacres and other forms of repression to prevent that from happening. Saddam Hussein's troops killed tens of thousands of Kurds in 1988, a time at which Iraq was receiving foreign aid from the administration of President Ronald Reagan.



votes for President of the United States. I said, "What's with you injuns, you indecisive?" They said, "Look at the voting machines they give us!" It's these voting machines that don't record. The election officials know the machines are broken and they don't fix them. That's what happened in Ohio. They have lists and lists of bad machines, which they know will eat votes.

Here is a number that should make you just fucking ill. The chance of your ballot being rejected for technical reasons is 900% higher if you're Black than if you're White in the United States of America. You do the arithmetic and you realize that most elections are decided by one- or two percent. That's your margin. If you think it's bad for Black people, Native Americans—I never really thought about the Native vote. I thought, how influential could that be? As it turns out, it's huge. If you knock out 10-12% of the Native American vote, which is totally Democratic, it was the difference in who won New Mexico.

Pepus: You've indicated that you expect more rejected votes in minority communities in 2008 than in '04. What sorts of evidence indicate that will be the case?

Palast: Because people are going after the wrong stuff. They love it when people say, "Don't put in new computer voting machines." Now, we shouldn't put in computer voting machines: the damn things cost 400% more than paper ballots with optical scanners and they have a higher vote-loss rate. So, it's good to stop these computer machines, but that doesn't solve our problem. That leaves the bad machines in place and they're really bad. They're eating minority votes. They love that no one's doing anything about it. The Republicans are now on a huge campaign to require IDs. They're mixing the war on terror, anti-immigrant stuff, and so-called voter reform. They're demanding that people produce IDs to vote. They say, "Well, what's wrong with that?" The answer is that there are 100 million voters in the United States, and do you know that I haven't found a case of false use of identity for voting? There was this Republican from a rich suburb in New Mexico (state legislator Justine Fox Young). She said, "I have evidence, I have documents showing people using false ID to register and voting twice." So I called her up and said: "Wow, you've got evidence? Fax it to me." She never faxed it to me. So I said, "What happened?" She said, "The FBI is investigating." I said, "They are? Really?! Give me the names of the agents." So she gave me names. I called the Justice Department. I said, "You found cases of voters voting twice?" They said, "Well, there are many things we are investigating." I said, "In other words, you don't even have a case. You're not investigating this." They said, "Well, um, that's right." She just fucking made it up!

I talked to the guy in charge of the Catholic Church's voter drive. He said: "You know what they were doing? They were using the voter ID game to knock out Hispanic voters." It's very easy. It's just like the old Jim Crow thing. They only stop Hispanic voters. If someone is named Jorge Rodriguez, they say: "Your driver's license says 'Jorge Rodriguez' but your voter registration says 'Jorge M. Rodriguez.' You can't vote." And there's nothing that these people can do to recover their votes. What happens is their votes get challenged and they get what's called a "provisional ballot" and it's just tossed away, or they get removed from the voter rolls. See, if you're removed from the voter rolls, even if it was done illegally, all you can get is your registration back. You don't get your vote back. That's the trick. After the election, they always fix it—until the next election.



"This is the most cynical fucking operation. It's like putting spiders in a bottle and watching them eat each other."

Armed Madhouse includes many other dispatches from the front lines of the class war, as Palast puts it. Some key topics are the plan to privatize Social Security and the consequences of the President's education policies for poor children. There is also an interesting discussion of the Bush administration's use of private companies to carry out its program of spying on U.S. citizens. The core of Palast's reporting is his sharp focus on the connections between big business and its supporters in government. This book reveals those links to an alarming degree.

For much more information, visit: www.gregpalast.com





CHAOS IN

"For a few minutes everyone forgot
about how many BELTS they had on,
what brand of HAIR DYE they used,
how much COKE
they could score,
AND JUST ENJOYED THEMSELVES."

A few years ago, Ken Sanderson of Prank Records put on the first Prankfest in Atlanta. It was so fun and so successful that it became an annual thing. The following year it was held here in Austin, TX, and along with Ken, was organized by Austin's punk scene king, Timmy Hefner. Eventually, Ken and Prank Records dropped out of the picture and this fest became known as Chaos In Tejas, although some people still called it Prankfest, some people called it Timmyfest, and by now most people are referring to it as Rikkifest, in honor of Rikki, a Portland transplant who has made our city even more fun, if you can believe that. Last year I was out of town for Chaos In Tejas, and was really bummed out on missing it, so this year I made sure I was in Austin for the festivities. Fuck South By Southwest. If you really wanna get a good feel for what the punk scene here in Austin is like, you need to come to Rikkifest.



TEUAS

WRITTEN by Ben Snakepit
PHOTOS by Jack Barfield (except where noted)
LAYOUT by Keith Rosson and Todd Taylor

THURSDAY, MAY 18

The city began to buzz with punkness as, slowly but surely, kids began to trickle in from the airport, Greyhound station, and even the train yards. I went to Tamale House to meet up with some Canadian friends, and coincidentally ran into some Portland friends. After a hearty breakfast of migas with cheese, a whole mess of us caravanned down to Barton Springs, Austin's swimmin' hole on Town Lake (known to non-Austinites as the Colorado River). We jumped in a canoe and paddled out to see some kids jumping off the Lamar Street pedestrian bridge, at least a two-story drop. More and more punks began showing up at the river, and I knew this was gonna be a fun weekend.

Unfortunately, there are some things you just don't have any control over. A perfect example is that I had to *work* on the first night of the fest.

CAREER SUICIDE

(their frontwoman Sarah is moving to New York) but still a good time, and Tillery was packed more full of people than I had ever seen, just in time for Toronto's Fucked Up to play a set of mostly covers. It got way too hot inside the show, so I goofed around in the parking lot with my friends, smoking weed and drinking beer (two big no-no's to do outside of the Tillery) until the show was over, then I hopped on my bike and cruised over to Zack's house, for the after-after party. The keg was tapped at 5:00 AM. Holy fuck. Zack plays guitar in World Burns To Death, who were supposed to play one of the shows on this fest, but had to cancel 'cause their drummer hadn't sufficiently healed from his vasectomy (true story). By 7:00 AM the keg was floated and so was I. Besides, I had to be at work in just two hours!

FRIDAY, MAY 19TH

After a hangover, un-good time at work, I managed to duck out early again and meet up with some friends down at Barton Springs. The place

I sweet-talked my co-workers into letting me ditch out early, but by the time I got to the show I had already missed the first two bands. Luckily, they were both local bands; the tough-guy hardcore of Iron Age, followed by the tight, Black Flaggy punk of Army Of Jesus. When I finally made it into Emo's, Chicago's Pedestrians were just starting their second song. They played a scorching set of '80s-influenced hardcore, and by the time they finished their set the club had filled to capacity. Next up was Sweden's Victims, raging all over the place as Emo's became a stinky, seething mass of bullet belts and spikes. After they were done, the infamous Limp Wrist took the stage and blew everyone away with their super-tight, super-aggressive set of hardcore songs about being gay and straightedge. It was really cool and inspiring to see a crowd of tough dudes all taking their shirts off and just straight-up admitting that a mosh pit is pretty gay. Limp Wrist frontman Martin gave an appropriate introduction to the next band. "We're so happy to be here playing with the Dicks. We love dicks." Sure enough, Austin's legendary Dicks finished out the night. While it was cool that such an old, famous band got to play this festival of music that they themselves had influenced the progression of; it still was basically a bunch of old dudes just kinda dicking around on the stage. It looked like a bunch of people's dads standing around in a backyard.

2:30 AM, and the Emo's show lets out, but the fest was far from over. Within a few minutes, all the punks stumbled over to the east side for an after-party at 423 Tillery, a new all-ages DIY warehouse space for a couple more bands. First up was the final performance of Modern Needs, a local trio that, while remaining pretty low-profile for their one year of existence, managed to play melodic female-fronted punk, which is something we don't have much of here in the way of local bands. It was sad to see them play a final show



TRAGEDY

result, and they all just seemed a little too tired. By the time they were done, everyone was ready for Portland supergroup Criminal Damage to take the stage. Everyone had pitched them to me as an oi band, but they weren't really that oi. They definitely had a street punk thing going on, but after all the hype I was expecting them to sound like Blitz, so I was a little disappointed.

No worries though, because the next band up were Fort Worth's Marked Men, who, while they didn't exactly fit with the other bands playing the fest, were a refreshing drink of water after the endless barrage of bullet belts and Amebix patches. They played a good, solid set, all the while, Bayonettes guitarist Mark Pesci was onstage dancing like a madman, having the time of his life. The Marked Men guys dedicated a song to him, during which he did a wicked stage dive into the waiting arms of...nobody. He landed smack-dab on the concrete floor, head first. When he didn't get up after a few minutes, his friends and bandmates rushed to his side. He wasn't moving. The band stopped playing. 911 was called. The fest had suddenly taken a somber turn for the worst. As paramedics rushed Mark off to the hospital, the Marked Men wished him well, and played a few more songs, but the momentum had died out and everyone was a little too freaked out to really enjoy them.

Career Suicide were up next, with their work cut out for them, following a set like that. They gave it their best, and while they were well received, they didn't really do much for me. Up next were the Austin/Portland supergroup Severed Head Of State. They kinda dressed down for the occasion—not nearly as many spikes as they usually brandished—but they still rocked. They started their set with the song "Not Fucking Dead," a little tip of the hat to the recovery of their singer, Jack Control. (In case you didn't know, Jack had been stabbed a few months earlier by some hobo punk outside after a J Church show. J Church draws a pretty rough crowd, I guess.) They played a blistering set of hardcore punk, and by the time they were done, everyone had forgotten about the near-tragedy of a few bands before.

Everyone was in a great mood, because the next and final band

for Emo's that night was the one and only Dead Moon. One great thing about this band is the way they can unite all the punks. There were tri-hawked fashion-plate street punks arm in arm with dirty trainhopper punks and horn-rimmed indie rockers dancing with dreadlocked bike hippies. It was beautiful. Just before they played, like right after the soundguy killed the house PA music and told the band they could start, I saw Fred and Toody—the long-time driving force behind Dead Moon—give each other a little kiss and it brought tears to my eyes. Their set was beautiful and perfect. I think they played two encores, but I don't know for sure because after the first one I had to jump on my bike and head

PEDESTRIANS photo by Matt Jasek



was totally overrun with punk rockers, paddling around in canoes, jumping off the Lamar Street bridge, and just generally fucking shit up on the Colorado River. Before long, it was time to head back to Emo's to get day two underway. The night started with the traditional d-beat sounds of Bastard Sons Of The Apocalypse, or BSA if you're in the know. They were followed by local peace punks Signal Lost. All the members of Signal Lost had some kinda part in organizing or accommodating visitors for the fest, and they were a little weary. Their set suffered as a

over to 423 Tillery for the next show.

First up was Night Of Rage, a Filth tribute band in which Jake Filth is actually the singer. They were followed by a second set from Limp Wrist, this one even sweatier and manlier than the previous night's. As the keg dwindled and the bands finished up, it was time to move on to the next party, once again at Zack's house. The keg was tapped at 5:00 AM and Japanese hardcore monsters Warhead and Forward played in the living room as the sun came up. I somehow ended up at home, but I have no idea how.

SATURDAY, MAY 20TH

If the river today was any indication, the fest was beginning to wear everyone a little thin. All the punks were swimming again, but everyone seemed to be talking and laughing and splashing around through a dirty, hangover haze, but you can't keep a good punk down. As everyone began to slowly filter into Emo's for the last official show of the fest, local kids Manikin warmed everyone up with a chilled-out set of their Joy Division-inspired space rock. It was a nice way to get my ears acclimated to the punishment they would soon receive. Next up were Austin's Krum Bums, blasting through their Exploited-worshipping bondage pant punk songs, proud of the fact that there were more mohawks onstage than band members. When they were done, the real surprise of the night—and maybe the whole fest—Toronto's Bayonettes took the stage and completely commanded Emo's. Their set of sassy poppy garage rock was just what I needed after all the tough-guy posturing of the weekend. Frontwoman Zoe jumped down into the crowd and danced around with everyone, and for a few minutes everyone forgot about how many belts they had on, what brand of hair dye they used, how much coke they could score, and just enjoyed themselves. The Bayonettes were, hands down, my favorite band of the entire fest. They left me with a hankering for more fun music.

Unfortunately, the next band, Oakland's Look Back And Laugh were not what I was craving. They weren't bad at what they did (classic fastcore type straight-edgy thrash) but I just wasn't in the mood for anymore tough guy screaming (ironic, since their singer was a woman). Not even the solid set by Toronto's Fucked Up could set me straight, although they, too, played a fantastic set of pissed off Black Flaggy hardcore.

Next up were the Japanese—the same two bands that had played the night before at Zack's house. Warhead had partied too hard the night before and it showed. They played a mediocre, tired show (compared to the previous night's performance) that seemed to drag on and on forever. Thankfully, their fellow countrymen Forward more than made up for it, with a rad bunch of fast, thoughtful hardcore songs. Forward are one of my favorite current Japanese hardcore bands, and they didn't disappoint.

Finally, the Emo's part of the fest culminated in a set from Tragedy, the biggest thing to come out of Portland since sliced bread. They completely slayed, and made me understand why so many bands try to sound like them. Luckily, this was the real deal and it was awesome. Dark, powerful, and heavy, I have yet to hear another hardcore band as

good as Tragedy.

As soon as they were done, everyone migrated over to the Lamar Street pedestrian bridge, which in the past few years has become a somewhat legendary place for Austin punk shows. This might've been the biggest bridge show I'd ever been to. Fucked Up, Career Suicide, and Look Back And Laugh all played sets to the crowd of about two hundred wasted punk rockers. It was rad fun, with naked kids in the pit, tall bikes whizzing by, and lots and lots of beer. By 4:00 AM I'd had enough; the weekend had totally drained me. I wandered home to find a few of my roommates and friends still partying on the back porch, the last few diehards, still trying to drink one more beer or do one more bump. It was a great ending to a great weekend. I'll have to do it again next year!

"There were trihawked fashion-plate street punks arm in arm with dirty trainhopper punks and horn-rimmed indie rockers dancing with dreadlocked bike hippies. It was beautiful."

SEVERED HEAD OF STATE



The idea of dressing like Church of Latter Day Saints missionaries serves two purposes for the Mormons, the band. For one, it's pretty damn funny to see Mormon missionaries rocking their asses off. And two, it's a big fuck you to the idea of rock stars dressing or looking a certain way: the "fashion show." It can have its drawbacks, like how everybody assumes they really are Mormons, or when they're accused of religious intolerance. But beyond their use of certain imagery and the analogy of rock bands also being on a mission, the Mormons, the band, aren't about religion at all. Well, not directly.

Throughout human history, there have been some among us who were able to enter into an ecstatic state of higher consciousness, a trance, if you will. Among shamanistic cultures, which are reckoned as being the oldest religious traditions among humans on earth, these people were revered as spiritual communicators, the direct link between you, the lowly hunter-gatherer, and the unknowable beyond. The idea of this state of ecstasy has been present in most religions since.

This brings us to lead singer Patrick. Twisting, writhing, flopping about as Devo-inspired guitars scream and drums resound. He flails and yells. Although the Mormons (the band) aren't about religion, Patrick seems to channel the energy of the universe every time he takes the stage. Part holy man, part demon. It's never boring, and can be quite injurious, both to anybody in his immediate vicinity or himself. Usually himself.

Patrick—vocals

Vince—guitars and vocals

Louie—guitars

Amy: When did you sprain your ankle?

Patrick: Um, I think the first or second song.

Amy: And you played the rest of the set.

Patrick: Yeah, I won't really feel it until probably tomorrow. It's gonna be pretty bad.

Amy: Is it swollen?

Patrick: Yeah.

Gus: Can we see it?

[Patrick pulls up his pant leg to show his ankle, now swollen like a good-sized orange.]

Gus: Wow.

Amy: What's the most physically detrimental thing you've done to yourself during a show?

Patrick: The first time I ever sprained my ankle, I think I fractured something, and I never went to a hospital. I had a fucked up ankle for a few months. It healed up, but now I'll sprain it just from walking down the street.

Gus: How many of you are current or former members of the Church of Latter Day Saints?

Vince: None of us.

Patrick: Zero.

Gus: So why "The Mormons?"

Patrick: It started out as just an image, just kind of a funny idea that grew into a concept. Basically, we're just trying to rock out correctly, and so we try to break down barriers of playing on stage, that sort of image, all that kind of stuff. We're not really focusing on anything in particular.

Gus: What exactly is "rocking out correctly"?

Patrick: We don't know exactly. But we try to do it every night. We try to rock out correctly, because that's our mission. As Mormons, that's our mission.

Gus: If the passion of playing shows and being in a band is equal to what is felt by religious missionaries, as you have said, would you guys be willing to declare a jihad on anybody?

Vince: We declare a jihad on lame music and the fashion show.

Amy: What constitutes lame music?

Vince: Sameness. A lot of bands copy each other.

Patrick: They're following a structure.

Vince: And you know when you make a copy of a copy, and then copy that copy and make another copy from that copy? It gets a little blotchy.

the MORMONS

interview and photos by Gus Straub & Amy Adóyzie
art junk by Amy Adóyzie



Amy: What's an example of that band?

Vince: I'm not gonna name bands or anything because I feel that being in a band is hard enough so we try not to rag on any other bands. But if you live in L.A. and you see what goes on in L.A., you see all the same kinds of bands, who look the same, who have the same Beck haircut. It's more like a fashion show. We're just more into the music than the actual image. We wear the Mormons uniform to kind of neutralize that.

Gus: So would you be willing to suicide bomb MTV or something like that?

Patrick: Maybe ourselves. At the end of our show, we'll blow ourselves up one day.

Louie: But that bomb is rock music.

Gus: So, it's a figurative bomb.

Vince: We're takin' everybody with us.

Patrick: The idea is not to take shit so seriously and still have a good time. To not get caught up on the meanings of things and to just be

yourself. We do things in a pure kinda way, if possible, without any kinda shit attached.

Gus: Would you describe your performance as a form of religious ecstasy?

Patrick: That, mixed with satire. At times, it's mocking the average stage performer, and at times when it's done correctly, is when I get out of that and I don't care. It's just a part of the music and everything is flowing.

Gus: Polygamy: sexy? Not sexy?

Vince: You know what? It's a hassle. Because it's hard enough to be with one woman. I've seen this TV show that's on HBO now and this poor guy has to deal with three female personalities.

Louie: Three wives.

Vince: Yeah. It's hard enough being with one broad and now you gotta deal with three.

Amy: Why're you looking at me? What the fuck? I ain't married to you!

“We try to
ROCK OUT
correctly,
because that's
our
MISSION.”





[laughter]

Vince: But, really, this band doesn't have anything to do with the religion. We don't talk shit on anybody's religion or beliefs. Anybody can believe whatever they want. The problem is that we all fight each other based on...

Patrick: Because we think that's what we should do. "This is good" and "This is bad" is based on what someone tells us it is.

Vince: Religion is a really touchy subject because it has a lot to do with faith. No one really knows what happens after you die or what the point of being here is. So people try to put a storyline to it and tie their beliefs to that. Our religion is to create music and enjoy life. That's as far as we go with the religion. A lot of people get confused when they see Mormons on there (postings, flyers), they think that we must be Mormons.

Patrick: That's the idea: to challenge to get past this basic imagery that you think this is how it's supposed to be.

Gus: When you say "religious imagery," you're actually transcending religious thought.

Patrick: That's the idea, but it doesn't always work. It's like going to a show and seeing a band and thinking, "This is a way a band should look. I should like them because they look the right way." It's hard to get past that. That's the main thing for me: to come up with something ridiculous that has nothing to do with anything to hopefully get past all that shit.

Vince: So we're not trying to cap on anybody. We're just trying to play music and it's a surreal kinda thing to see Mormons playing rock music. It contradicts itself because the Mormon religion is known as being straight-laced and conservative. In fact, we ran into one guy who was Mormon who said he got kicked out of the

church because he listened to Slayer.

Patrick: That's where it falls into satirizing the structure of rock'n'roll bands, to get out of that and bringing it forward. That's what we started out as.

Gus: So you're anti-Black Sabbath?

Patrick: Right, exactly.

Gus: If we were to take this to the logical extreme, considering music a religion, who do you consider to be the great Satan of music these days? Satan being a bad thing.

Vince: The great Satan would probably be the record industry.

Gus: As a whole?

Vince: Well, not lately because the record industry is changing and a lot of the bigger labels are losing a lot of money because of the internet and digital technology. Now anybody could make a song and have it sound just as good as something you might hear on the radio.

Patrick: The big Satan in rock'n'roll could be anybody. It's us as times. It's how you look at things.

Amy: Why have there been so many lineup changes?

Vince: It's really hard. You've got several different personalities and it's a balance, it's like spinning plates. It's a common thing for people to leave. In fact, Louie left and then he came back. We just got a new drummer, Johnny. When we lost our drummer, Ryan, Joey stepped in. We've had about seven or eight lineup changes since we started in August of '98. But it's remained consistent, in the sound and overall energy.

Gus: How's Ryan doing?

Joey: He's doing very well and he's itching to play some music. When you're in a band with people, it's like a relationship. It's hard losing people, you miss them, but sometimes things just don't work out.

Amy: Was it because Ryan was white?

Patrick: Yeah, I'm the only white guy left.

Louie: He's gonna be the next one. He just doesn't know it yet.

Patrick: I'm just infiltrating the rock en español scene.

Amy: Does being Latino affect your music at all?

Patrick: Why would it?

Vince: I don't think it has anything to do with it. Music is such a common, universal thing. Everybody likes music, no matter what type it is. That's how we can relate to people.

Gus: In your experience, have you known real Mormons?

Patrick: Most of them that come up to us are really positive...

Gus: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. Are Mormon girls kinda slutty?

Patrick: I don't think we've met too many Mormon girls, or too many girls in general.

Vince: No, you don't want to say that. We meet a lot of girls. The girls are just crazy about us. We don't know why.

Amy: It must be the uniform.

Vince: Must be the uniform, which is another reason why we wear it.

Gus: What's the worst show the Mormons have ever played?

Vince: That would probably be one of the ones where we fought onstage. One of them. There have been a few of those.

Amy: What does that entail? When you fight onstage?

Vince: That's going back to the other question about maintaining a band and keeping everyone together. Personalities are gonna clash. We went on a full U.S. tour last summer, and being together for thirty days with the same group of people. We were out with another group called 8-Bit; that's about eleven people together. We're gonna get on each other's nerves and have arguments. It's just like any other relationship, and it actually makes us stronger if it doesn't kill us. I can't tell you what shows. In the last eight

years, we've probably played over three hundred shows, and those are the ones that stand out in my mind where someone is just irritated with somebody and it just escalates.

Amy: Do you stop playing?

Vince: No. That's the one thing we don't do. We always play through our shows, even when we're fighting in the middle of it. But that's not all the time. Two or three out of three hundred isn't that bad. No matter if there's two people in the crowd or 250 people in the crowd, we always give our best effort and enjoy ourselves.

Gus: What's next for the Mormons?

Vince: We're going to record a new album really soon. We're working on new material and we just got through with this week-long tour with Ninja Academy. That's what we're in the middle of right now and we're not thinking of anything else except driving home after this. We're planning a full U.S. tour and we're playing at the Rose Bowl with some really big rock en español bands.

Amy: How'd you get invited to do that?

Vince: Our drummer Johnny, his girlfriend works with LATV and she hooked it up.

Amy: Did you get invited to play because most of ya'll are Latino?

Patrick: We're thinking that may be the case.

Gus: Why you always gotta be making everything a racial thing?

Amy: Dude, they brought it up! They're playing a rock en español fest!

Vince: Well, that's true. The truth of the matter is that four out of five of us are of Latin heritage. I grew up in a Mexican-American household and that's the only thing I've ever known.

Patrick: I live in a Mexican-American neighborhood, so I'm kinda associated.

Vince: We didn't make Patrick renounce his whiteness.

Gus: How has tour been with Ninja Academy?

Vince: I'm a big fan of theirs. We've had one of the best times out on the road with Ninja Academy. They're one of the best bands I've seen in a long time, and I'm not just saying that because we're on tour with them.

Amy: Where are they from?

Vince: They're from L.A. We're all part of the same circle of bands.

Patrick: There's like a weird scene of costume bands that don't fit anywhere and just try to have a good time.

Vince: There is a weird circle of costume bands, if you wanna call them costume. I don't want to cheapen it by saying that. There's 8-Bit. They're robot rappers. There's The Bolines from Long Beach and they dress like scientists. And the Ninjas.

Patrick: And The Leeches.

Vince: They're just really good bands and it goes beyond a costume thing. Of course, initially, when people see grown men dressed in costume playing music, they're just going to see the costume at first. But afterwards, if the music is good enough it's going to supersede that whole visual factor, and the whole visual is just going to become part of the fun.

Gus: Where does Slipknot fit into that whole thing?

Vince: Slipknot figures into...a band that I don't even know.

Gus: I think they wear masks and shit.

Vince: Also, a slipknot is a knot.

Gus: You were a boy scout at one time, were you not?

Vince: The preliminary knot in my shoelace tying is a slipknot, and then I use a bow to tie it down.

“The BIG SATAN
of rock n roll
can be anyone.
It's us at times.”



DAN SARTAIN

*Dan Sartain takes the most feral music of the past five decades—rockabilly, garage punk, hillbilly, blues—and strips it down with a 1950s greaser sensibility and stark minimalism, frequently accompanying himself with only his own crackling, distorted guitar. His 2003 breakthrough album, *Dan Sartain vs the Serpientes*, plays like an alternately brooding and raucous aural tour through the trailer parks and jukebox joints of his native Birmingham, Alabama. And this protégée of former Rocket From The Crypt front man John Reis is still only a doe-eyed twenty-four-year-old. I caught up with Sartain when he was in London recording his follow-up LP at Toe Rag Studios. The new album sounds intriguing—Sartain drops points of reference such as Gene Vincent, Phil Spector and Alice Cooper.*

Interview and photos by Graham Russell
Art by Julia Smut

Graham: Tell me about the music you grew up listening to in Birmingham, Alabama. I'm assuming it was country and western?

Dan: I think Dad graduated high school about '71 or '72, so that'll put the age of my parents kind of in a little more perspective if you do some math. They were really into Crosby, Stills and Nash, Jackson Browne, Neil Young. I like Neil Young. They were into Alice Cooper. My parents turned me onto Alice Cooper! It's cool, you know! Most people would listen to Alice Cooper to piss their parents off! My parents were like, this guy is good—watch this video! He's like chopping his head off and shit. So not too much country and western, but it's definitely in the family.

Country and western was their parents' music. So, for them, listening to Crosby, Stills and Nash and Jackson Brown was like rebelling against Hank Williams and shit like that. So when I got into my teenage years, what better way to rebel against your hippie parents than become a greaser! So I got obsessed with all that shit. Got into rockabilly stuff. By that point

my parents didn't have anything to prove to anyone. They didn't have to be cool to their friends in high school and they weren't rebelling against anything and I kind of turned them onto Johnny Cash and Hank Williams and Leadbelly, so it was kind of a reverse thing. They were like, "Okay, that stuff's good." Maybe when I'm forty I'll

admit that Jackson Brown is okay. I don't see that happening! Maybe my kids will be into Jackson Browne when they're rebelling against me! (Rockabilly remains an essential touchstone for Sartain. At his gig, after our interview, he opened his set by tearing through Rufus Thomas's "Tiger Man" from 1953.)

Graham: And there was the influence of your older brother's taste.

Dan: Definitely. He was the classic cool older brother. We grew up in the '80s. He's thirty-two now and I'm twenty-four, so there's a little bit of an age difference there. He was into cock rock spandex metal bands, and he liked Prince and Michael Jackson. Eighties guys. Well, Prince spans the realm of anybody, I think! He was into that stuff, and then he eventually got into The Cure. The Cure was kind of the gateway into good music. The Cure led him into Sonic Youth. He had good musical taste. When I was a little kid and listening to MC Hammer he'd be the one to be like, "Here's a copy of *Daydream Nation*," or something like that. He went into the Navy and they stationed him in San Diego for a while. He picked up on the local stuff happening there in '91, '92, '93, when everybody was looking at San Diego as the next Seattle, which kind of didn't pan out. There were a lot of good bands and a scene there. He turned me on to Rocket From The Crypt. That was the band I loved out of there. I liked all of 'em. It was cool to have these 45s and CDs of these bands your friends didn't know from San Diego. It turned into a lifelong love affair with the San Diego music and those guys, and I wound up giving a demo to 'em and they liked it. And it's cool, man. It worked out! (Sartain means he gave his demo to Rocket From The Crypt/Hot Snakes leader John Reis, who snapped him up for his Swami record label and released *Dan Sartain Vs the Serpientes*.)

Graham: What about Rocket From The Crypt appealed to you in particular?

Dan: What was the thing that hit right before them? It was the Nirvana/Seattle, wear whatever you want, scruffy flannel and shit. That shit ended after a while and it was fun and I was real young and impressionable when that stuff came along, and Rocket From The Crypt was pretty much the complete opposite. All their songs were tight, they had their act down, and they looked good. They had their shit down to a T.

Graham: Their sense of showmanship.

Dan: They were definitely showmen. Before them all the bands I used to see stared at their goddamned shoes and mumbled all the time. They

...BUT THERE'S A HUGE FOREGOING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TALENT AND SOUL.

were on the money, man—they were way over a lot of folks' heads at the time. It seemed like they were almost a little scared about being too successful. Keeping it real or keeping it punk or whatever.

Graham: You started performing at age thirteen or fourteen. What kind of material were you performing at that age?

Dan: I was playing a lot of different shit. It wasn't whatever was in the Top 40, but it was stuff to please a crowd. Whatever had that three-chord '50s pattern: a lot of Elvis, a lot of Buddy Holly. Little Richard. Chuck Berry. The classics. They all had the same chord pattern—it was just a difference in delivery. I kind of adopted those chord patterns and started writing my own stupid, silly songs! Then I eventually started playing a bunch of minor chords and playing them faster and faster, getting more confident. And it turned into my style.

Graham: And you already had your quiff?

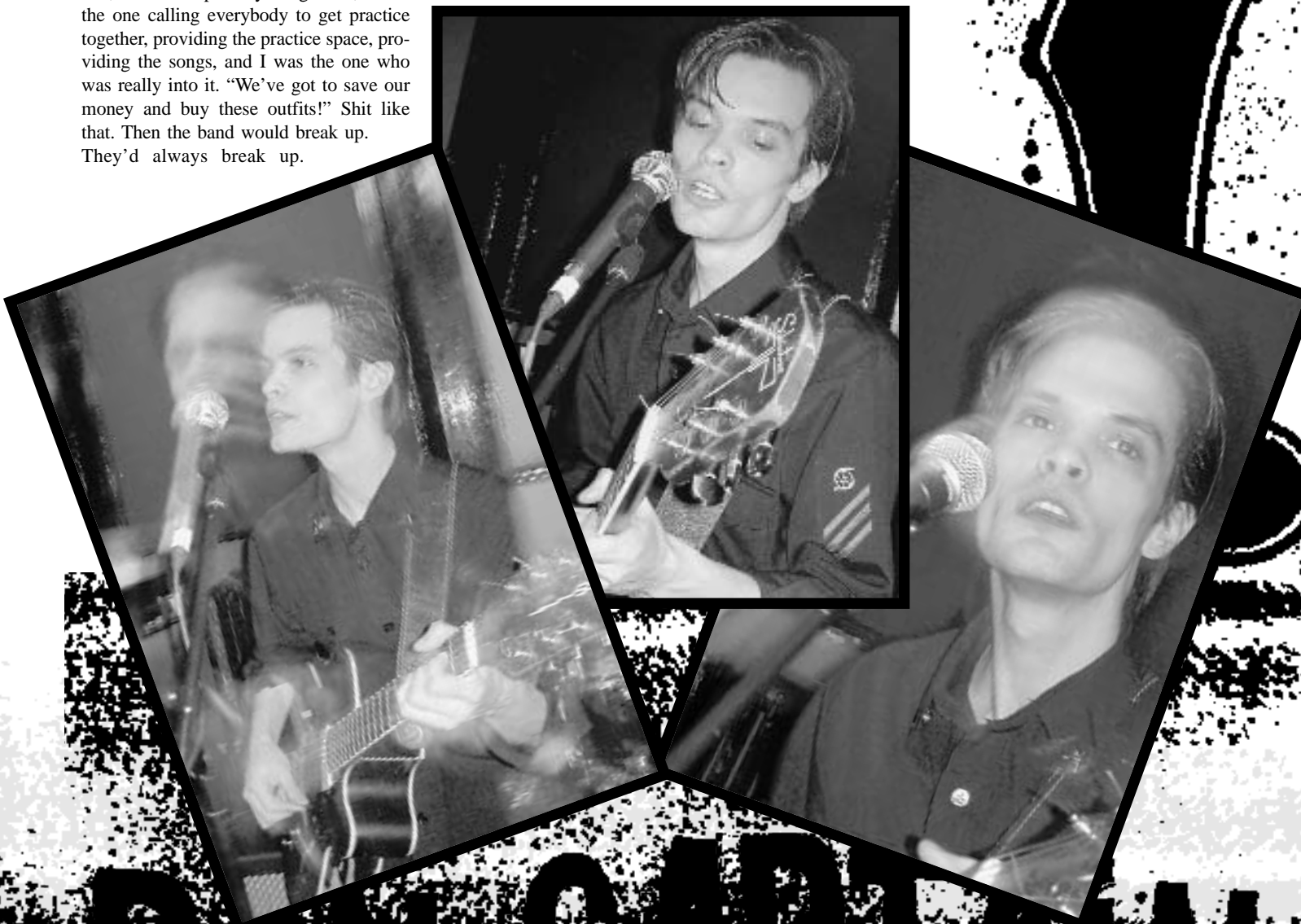
Dan: Yeah, man it was way bigger then, I'll tell you that much! I wouldn't step out of my room without a big pompadour!

Graham: Before becoming a solo artist, you were in punk bands as a teenager. What were your early punk bands like?

Dan: [Dismissive] They were nothing nobody had ever heard of. They weren't all good—not all of my bands were good. I really liked the band X. The reason I became a solo artist is because bands always break up, man. And most of the bands I was in, with the exception of a few, I was the primary songwriter, I was the one calling everybody to get practice together, providing the practice space, providing the songs, and I was the one who was really into it. "We've got to save our money and buy these outfits!" Shit like that. Then the band would break up. They'd always break up.

Bands *always* fucking break up. Except The Stones, I guess. "Why do I want to ditch up all these songs that I just wrote, just because this other asshole isn't playing drums anymore? Fuck it, I'll just go out and say I'm Dan Sartain." I bought a 4-track and I'm recording the drums and the bass and everything now, so I might as well just say it's me and get different people in. It's not successful, by any means, as a way of sustaining life in a normal fashion, but I think it's successful enough that I can invite my friends to come and play in a band with me. I'm predicting pretty soon it'll be Dan Sartain and The Wailers or whatever. [Speculates on potential band names.] Dan Sartain and the Jumping Jets or some bullshit!

Graham: Your first two records



(*Dan Sartain & the Crimson Guard* and *Romance in Stereo*.) These records (featured great song titles like “Boxcutter in My Boot”) were totally DIY, self-financed and released on your own label. How did you find doing it that way?

Dan: I never thought of it as a label. I didn’t have any intentions of putting out anybody else’s stuff. I just put them out and they were what they were. Sometimes I think it was funner like that.

Graham: Is there less hassle now with someone else paying for you to record and putting it out for you?

Dan: It’s still a hassle. Sometimes I can light a fire under somebody’s ass and they’ll get real excited about it and offer to do stuff like that, but most of the time I still wind up recording it by myself. Ideally, if I make any money this year, I’ll have my own shit. That’s my dream: to have my own shit and be able to record my own stuff instead of driving all over God’s creation to get your friend to lay down the drum track or some shit, you can come to my house! I want to be able to have the stuff to make a song, make the song into a CD,

cobra is kind of powerful and authoritative but the leech is kind of the underbelly...you’ve got people above you who are kicking you down and keeping you down and got their boot on your neck, but then you got people under you saying, “Gimme what you got. I want what you got,” pulling and tugging. That’s what Cusd’anato taught Mike Tyson.

Graham: Is there much of a scene in Birmingham, and how do you fit into it?

Dan: As soon as you say you’re from Birmingham, people think you live on a dirt road in a cotton field...there’s a preconceived notion there’s going to be a rootsy or bluesy feel to it. But then those people find out I grew up on Sonic Youth and Nirvana that illusion’s going to kind of go away. Yeah, I got my friends there but there’s some haters and they’re growing. Biggie or Tupac said you’re nobody ‘til somebody hates you! There’s way more talented musicians in town than me, but there’s a huge fucking difference between talent and soul. Leadbelly probably didn’t actually have much musical talent, and then you got some guy like Steve Vai. He’s got more talent in his pinky finger than I’ve got in my whole fucking body, but I wouldn’t sit at one of his shows for nothing, man! I wouldn’t watch his ass! He’s lame. As

I WOULD MARRY A PICTURE OF JOHNNY CASH.

and that’s a dream come true. I don’t need anything else. Some weed. Some cigarettes. [laughs] A car. A jacuzzi.

Graham: You financed the early records with day jobs like working as a gas station attendant, barber, and construction worker. Are those days behind you?

Dan: [Adamant] I’m *not* going back to work. I’d sooner become a bum and just live on the street than go back to work. It’s just a dead end street for me. I’m really small, man. I can’t work these manual labor jobs. There’s guys been there ten, fifteen, twenty years and they’re going to be cynical assholes and they ain’t going to like the new guy. I don’t have a skill except for music. I’m not going to be able to show up at their job and have them respect me. They’re going to kick my ass from the first day I walk in there! Nah, I ain’t going back to work! Unless I could get some hip job at a vintage clothing store or a record store or a record label—some hipster job! Sure, I’d work that! But those aren’t the jobs I’m getting offered.

Graham: The song, “Leeches, Pt. 1” is so angry. Is it about anything or anyone in particular?

Dan: It’s got the same principle as the “Cobras” thing. (Many of the lyrics on *Dan Sartain Vs the Serpientes* are filled with animal imagery, including a whole three-song conceptual section about cobras.) I wrote another Leeches song, which is going to be on the next record. It’s different: more up and jumping. Mike Tyson had this manager called Cusd’anato who lived in Catskills, New York and he got Mike out of Brooklyn and taught him how to scientifically box. But this guy taught Mike Tyson there’s a lot of animals out there disguised as human beings and you’re not intelligent enough to decipher them. That’s pretty much the same thing the “Leeches” and the “Cobras” songs are about. There’s fucking animals out there disguised as human beings, man! The

far as the Birmingham scene goes...the problem with Birmingham is there is a lot of shows. You can go out pretty much any night of the week and see a band and be entertained. It’s like Detroit had their sound. New York had their sound. London has their sound. San Francisco had their thing at one point in time. Birmingham never had their thing. They never had something that was the Birmingham sound. The closest they had was Muscle Shoals. They recorded a lot of folks. It’s not really anything that caught on. It’s very diverse. It’s definitely a city. You can definitely go out and see bands and meet hipsters. But it doesn’t have its *thing*.

Graham: It’s funny reading the comparisons to Johnny Cash you’ve been getting. My theory is that you don’t deliberately try to sound particularly 1950s or like Johnny Cash, but that your music unconsciously taps into the spirit of Sun Studios in the 1950s.

Dan: I hope so, man. ‘Cause they did some of the best recordings ever out there. I fucking *love* Johnny Cash. I would *marry* a *picture* of Johnny Cash. But I don’t want people to be disappointed; someone to tell their friend, “You’ve gotta go see this guy because he sounds just like Johnny Cash,” ‘cause if they show up they’re going to be extremely disappointed! Johnny Cash did his thing and he did it great, but I can’t do it. It’s too much responsibility to feel comfortable with, to be quite honest.

Graham: You’re recording the new album in London with Liam Watson at Toe Rag Studios.

Dan: I sat down with Liam and we didn’t talk too much about what we would do if he and I worked together. We mostly just talked about records. You can tell if some guy has got it going on. I would talk about a record and his eyes would light up a little bit. I said “Be Bop a Lula.” Just the beginning, when Gene Vincent sings “Welllll...” it just sounds so fucking great. I said that, and his eyes lit up and my eyes lit up. He said, “I can do that! I can do that!” I said, “If you can do that, you’re the guy I want.” We’re

going to do the same thing Gene Vincent did. I also fucking really need an echo chamber, man! I got a big boner for Phil Spector last year. I read a biography about him. I love Phil Spector, man. Free Phil Spector! For real! He should be like 007: he needs a license to kill! If Phil Spector thinks you should be dead, he's probably right!

Graham: Lyrically, what are you going on about these days?

Dan: Dirty fiends and filthy whores! For real, man! Pretty much the same shit, just stating it better. Breaking shit down to where people can understand it. Like Chuck Berry said, "I'm trying to sell songs to teenagers." I'm going to sing a song about a fast car. All teenagers want a car. Well, if you haven't been in love yet, you soon will be. If you have been in love then you can relate to it. And if you haven't been, you're going to be extremely curious about it, so I'm going to sing about teenage love and dancing. So he was definitely catering to his audience. You got to kind of break it down so everyone can understand it. I sing a lot of songs about girls and experiences, but not just girls—I sing songs about dickhead guys I know.

(Sartain is clean-shaven when we meet. I admit to him I'm missing his supremely sleazy signature moustache, the kind that looks like it's drawn on with an eyeliner pencil).

Dan: They come and go. Moustaches are kind of flavor savers, you know what I mean? I smoke a lot of cigarettes. If I keep a moustache for more than a couple of months it starts to retain flavor. It's really nasty. Have you ever looked at an old man who's completely white haired and has a beard, but the bottom of his moustache is brown? They're kind of like pets! They're going to die and you've got to get a new one. You can tell when you've got a dead moustache on your face. When you've got a new moustache it's pretty lively and looks good and it's all shiny and you're happy about it, but your moustache dies after a while like a Chia pet and you gotta get a new one.

Graham: Was it a tribute to Little Richard?

Dan: Mine came out looking more like Little Richard, but I was looking at Chuck Berry, too, man.

Graham: And John Waters.

Dan: I guess it's 'cause I'm white I end up looking a lot like John Waters. My girlfriend is crazy about John Waters, but I don't think she sexually desires John Waters.

Graham: The article about you in *NME* said you sleep in a coffin. Was that a joke?

Dan: Yeah, it was totally a joke! Judy (his U.K. publicist), when we first started working together, she asked me to shoot her an email and tell her what I'm like. So I put that I sleep in a coffin.

Graham: And the journalist took it literally?

Dan: Yeah! And the photographer showed up at the house and asked, "Where is your coffin?" I don't have a fucking coffin!

Graham: In the same article it says you suffer from agoraphobia. How do you reconcile that with touring and travelling?

Dan: I'm a self-imposed agoraphobic: a wannabe agoraphobic. I want to sit around all day. Masturbate about twenty times. Smoke about five blunts. Watch movies all day and not do shit. I *want* to be agoraphobic. But I do feel like I don't want to go outside sometimes. Self-imposed rainy days sometimes, I guess. It's not any kind of Kurt Cobain/*Last Days*-type thing where you don't want to see anyone and mumble—I just don't want to go outside sometimes. I'm pretty happy just to sit around my house!

Graham: How do you feel about the growing hype around you? Do you feel under pressure to be the next White Stripes? Or can you just shrug that off?

Dan: It's easy to shrug off when it's someone you're not personally dealing with saying that kind of thing, but when it's someone you're personally dealing with saying we need something we can send to radio. I don't give a fuck! I've never written a song thinking this

would sound good on radio. If it sounds good on radio, that's great! I *want* it to sound good on radio, but I don't go out of my fucking way. It is a little weird.

Graham: Up until now you've only had to please yourself.

Dan: Exactly. If other people are pleased, it's a bonus. The White Stripes have got their act down and they've got it perfectly—why do you need another White Stripes? Why do you need another Johnny Cash? Johnny Cash was perfect as Johnny Cash. Why do you need a new one? Everyone was looking for a new Nirvana. Why do you need a new Nirvana? They were Nirvana and they were good. When it comes down to it, and I'm in the studio in front of a microphone and playing my thing, I'm not thinking about those fucking people. Ultimately, if somebody likes the record and wants to put it out, go for it.

Graham: What is the significance of the imagery on the cover of *The Serpientes* (which shows Sartain with a noose around his neck)?

Dan: It's about Alice Cooper, man. And I saw some pictures of James Dean and he did that. He looked really cool. I took these pictures, and I actually did have to hang myself for five, ten seconds while my friend went click click click, then I put my toes back on the stairs. But they cut my fucking feet off the album cover, so you couldn't see that I was actually hanging! So I did all that shit for nothing! I guess my neck got real stretched out. When my mother saw 'em (those photos) she was *horrified*. But on the next album cover I'm blowing my brains out!

Graham: You're disturbed.

Dan: I'm not into self-mutilation or anything like that. I don't cut my arms or anything. Ever since I've seen Alice Cooper do it—killing yourself on stage, that's so fucking cool, man!

www.myspace.com/dansartain



PINK RAZORS!

Interview and pictures by Ben Snakepit



Richmond, Virginia is a city living in a big shadow.

It's just a few hours away from major metropolitan areas of the United States, a two-hour drive to Washington, D.C. Three hours to Baltimore. It's a stone's throw from Philadelphia and a twelve-dollar bus ride to New York City. Richmond has always had a bit of a Napoleon complex, and as a result has always produced a lot of angry, violent bands. Even the Richmond bands that were exceptions to this hardcore rule (Avail, Strike Anywhere) still had a bordering-on-unhealthy dose of testosterone and jock pit mentality. So when I first heard the infectious, bouncy snottiness of the Pink Razors, I was amazed. They had the aggression of Dillinger Four, the sweetness of Screeching Weasel, and the brattiness of the Vindictives.

Mike: Guitar/Vocals Jeff: Guitar/Vocals

Ben: So you guys are the biggest Chixdiggitt fans ever, is that right?

Justin: It's not so much that we love Chixdiggitt as we love Canada.

Ben: What do you have to say about Canada?

Justin: Molson, donuts...

Ben: Molson donuts?

Justin: Yeah, that's what we like our donuts actually filled with. Actually, funny story is, we wrote them (Chixdiggitt), I mean, Jeff wrote them and explained to them; we Googled our band name first and made sure no one had it, and once we were starting to get established, I mean, we had played one

This interview seemed doomed from the start. I originally sat down with the guys in the living room of the "Fortress of Solid Dudes," a big punkhouse with an even bigger basement that's become a bit of a mainstay on the Richmond house show circuit. But by the time the tape was rolling, everyone was too drunk and the interview quickly degenerated into a party, and most of the interview came out garbled and unusable. Undaunted, I called Justin to schedule a follow-up interview, on a relaxed spring evening sitting on his backyard halfpipe, while the guys rolled out a box of new shirts to hit the road with. This interview was much more coherent and informative, but when I got home to transcribe the tape, I realized the batteries had died about a third of the way into the interview. So here is a composite of the two separate interviews, seamlessly written into one, because I am such a fucking genius.

Justin: Bass Adam: Drums.

show and decided we were a band, we realized that Chixdiggitt's new record was gonna be called *Pink Razors*, so we wrote them and were like, "Can you guys please not name your new record that, 'cause it would be a huge pain in the ass for all of us," and they were like, "Nope, but we checked your band



out and you guys are pretty okay.” So we fucking hate them.

Ben: Do you think maybe you can get ‘em back by naming your next album *Chixdiggit*?

Mike: We wouldn’t give ‘em the fuckin’ satisfaction.

Justin: Yeah, when we were doing the last record one of our rejected album titles was *Smells Like Chixdiggit*, which isn’t that funny, I guess.

Ben: So you guys are pretty unashamed to say that you’re a pop punk band, which actually kinda takes a lot of balls in 2006.

Mike: I wouldn’t say “unashamed,” my friend.

Ben: But you say pop punk; you don’t try to make up some new kinda genre, like how the Modern Machines say they’re “basement punk,” but they’re just pop punk really, y’know? But the thing is that pop punk, especially among underground bands, is this shameful thing to admit that you do.

Jeff: We’re not trying to be innovators or anything; we’re just doing what we do.

Justin: We’ve had both sides of it. Some people are stoked about it and some people think we’re trying to cash in or something.

Ben: So when somebody asks you, “What kind of music do you play?” and you tell them “pop punk,” and they go, “Oh, like Blink 182?” What do you say to that?

Jeff: I say, “Yeah, kinda like Blink 182.”

Ben: Do you think it’s finally safe for real punk bands to start playing pop punk again?

Justin: We’re making it safe. [laughs]

Ben: I mean, you all pretty much come from backgrounds of playing hardcore type stuff—Justin was in Youth Decay, Jeff, you were in Stop It! and T.F.A. Was this switch to pop punk a conscious decision?

Jeff: Well, yeah. I was the drummer in all my previous bands, and I always just kinda had to play what was presented to me, but when I started writing my own songs, they came out more pop punk.

Mike: Plus, after a while it’s nice to write songs that actually sound good instead of just trying to see how many fucked-up chords you can put together.

Ben: So you guys are about to leave on a big tour with Avail.

Justin: Yeah, we’re stoked about it.

Ben: Do you think that Avail still has the draw and appeal that they used to?

Mike: I don’t think that they have the same draw, but they’re not doing anything too different from what they’ve always done.

Adam: I think they’re just as important as they were before. I mean, I still listen to the fuck out of them.

Justin: A part of it is, we definitely know, as well as they do, where they stand nowadays, and we all kinda went out of our way to do

this trip and it’s not ‘cause we were like, “Wow, this is huge and we’re on some cusp of things.” It’s just that we all grew up in Richmond, except for Mike (who still grew up listening to Richmond bands), and we just think it’s cool. It was nice of them to ask us and we’re really stoked.

Ben: Do you think that maybe they asked you to come along because you guys are the hot shit these days, and maybe the kids are gonna come to the show to see the Pink Razors?

Justin: Are you kidding? Did you just see the show we played downstairs? (There were about fifty kids at the show; apparently a poor turnout.)

Ben: Yeah, it was bad-ass.

Justin: Well, it’s ‘cause you like pop punk, man. You and like six other kids on the East Coast. That’s why we get together with bands like Bent Outta Shape or the Modern Machines and we’re like hugging each other—it’s like sanctuary.

Ben: Well, then, when you go on tour what do most of the bands you play with sound like?

Jeff: We play with punk bands.

Justin: We play with punk bands. We play with a lot of hardcore bands. The first tour we did we played with pretty much all pop punk bands, but they were in pop punk cities, like Minneapolis.



After a while it's nice to write songs just trying to see how many fucked-

Ben: So tell me about writing to Motorola to ask for free pink Razr phones.

Jeff: I just felt like they owed it to us, since they were stealing our name,

and I wrote 'em and they didn't really see eye to eye with me. I told them that the very least they could do was give us free phones, and they just sent back a form letter basically. It wasn't really a high drama situation or anything. I wrote them a second letter, and I feel like I articulated my points clearly, but they didn't write back again.

Ben: What are your favorite cities to play in the U.S. so far?

Mike: Gainesville.

Jeff: Minneapolis was fun. Raleigh.

Justin: Philly can be hit or miss; the kids are nice to us but the shows can be kinda weird.

Ben: There's definitely this stigma with Richmond bands. Not just Avail, but like Strike Anywhere and Ann Beretta or whoever, they

all have such hometown pride, proud as shit to be from Richmond, definitely more so than any other town I've encountered in the country. What is your take on Richmond pride?

Justin: I like living here.

Jeff: It's okay. I don't wanna claim it for cred or anything.

Ben: Why do you think that other bands make it into such a big deal?

Justin: Well, you were saying earlier that Richmond's actual scene is kinda weak, but there are a lot of bands from here. I think this town is actually kinda underappreciated—it's not like a New York or Philly—and I think the people here wanna give Richmond its due, being kinda overshadowed by these other big East Coast cities.

Mike: Well, coming from Florida, Richmond was the fucking shit. I had Gainesville only an hour from me, and you would always hear about Richmond bands, you know, Avail, Strike Anywhere, Ann Beretta. Down in Florida we looked up to Richmond like it was

New York City, but now, living here and being in a band from here, it's like...

Ben: So from an outsider's perspective, is it everything you expected?

Mike: No, but then again I was in high school then. When I was sixteen I expected a lot more out of a lot of places, but when reality hits, I mean, pretty much any city can be like that. You can love it or hate it wherever you go. You're gonna have fun at shows no matter where you are, so it's all kinda relative. But Richmond fucking rules.

Ben: Richmond is still sometimes known as "fist city" 'cause of all the violence at the shows here. Have you experienced any of that at your shows?

Mike: No, thankfully. I don't think any of those tough guys know who we are.

Adam: Hopefully it'll stay like that.

Ben: Who are some new bands in Richmond that people should check out?

Mike: Brainworms.

Justin: The Landmines, the Ultra Dolphins.



**ags that actually sound good instead of
d-up chords you can put together.**

Ben: So your new record is doing pretty good?

Justin: Oh yeah, I just bought a house. It all plateaued when we started wearing makeup, and records sales just shot up.

Ben: What made you decide to stay with Robotic Empire? You guys aren't exactly par for the course on that label.

Mike: Well, I think it makes us stick out more, since all the other bands on the label are more hardcore than us, plus Andy is a chill-ass dude and we like working with him.

Jeff: I actually work for Andy doing mail order stuff for Robotic Empire, and it makes it a lot easier on the level of a band dealing with their label since I see him all the time. I think it's a little advantage we have over most bands. Plus, I don't think any other labels have shown any interest in us. [laughs]

Ben: What are your other day jobs?

Adam: I used to deliver food and wash dishes, but I just quit to go on this tour.

Mike: I sell coffee. A Barista.

Justin: I'm a courier.

Ben: A bike courier?

Justin: [Reluctantly] Yes.

Ben: Do you wear one of those little yellow hats with the bill that flips up?

Justin: No.

Ben: Do you roll up your pant leg on one side? Or do you shave your legs so you can go faster?

Justin: That's why I said "courier" instead of "bike messenger," 'cause I knew you'd give me shit about it.

Ben: So I read all your band blogs on Myspace, and Jeff, you write some pretty funny, insightful shit. Do you write the lyrics too?

Jeff: Most of them. Mike wrote a couple, but, yeah, I write most of the lyrics.

Ben: Who's the worst band you've ever played with?

Everyone: Uhh...

Ben: You don't have to name names if you don't want to, just describe them.

Mike: We've actually been pretty lucky as far as playing with bands that are good.

Ben: What about the best bands you've played with?

Justin: This is for *Razorcake*, right?

Ben: Yeah.

Justin: Then the readers already know. We're just gonna sound like assholes dropping names like everyone else. You know, typical *Razorcake* fare: Bent Outta Shape, Modern Machines, Clorox Girls. Maybe one band that Razorcakers don't know about is the Street Sharks, out of Raleigh, North Carolina. I guess I just totally named all the bands I didn't wanna name.

Ben: Don't worry. There's an editing process. A lot of this is gonna get edited out.

[At this point, somebody brings in a gravity bong and the interview deteriorates into unintelligible babble.]

myspace.com/pinkrazors



BAD DUDES

INTERVIEW BY KAT JETSON Ben: drums///Brady: guitar///Dan: guitar///Daniel: bass///Phil: keys

Bad Dudes formed two years ago from the heavily synthesized and punked-up/progressive/million-notes-a-minute ashes of Los Angeles' much-revered Miracle Chosuke. Does the Bad Dudes sound borrow a little bit from the book of Chosuke? Sure, but with all five members getting along (almost) always famously, and contributing equally to the songwriting—along with everyone occasionally singing (but only on record)—Bad Dudes have come up with a few more chapters.

Live, their music is fast-paced, tempo-charged testosterone. On record, their sound is a math rock version of Devo meets '70s rock harmonies. And that's just what I think today. (My opinion seems to change with each listen.) I'm sure they'll disagree, as they're not really keen on how others have labeled them thus far, but when your band isn't carbon copying others, the end result is hard to pin down. Either

way, they're fucking hilarious and rarely take themselves too seriously. Well, except when for it comes to making the music.

In order for you to understand even half of what's going on in this interview, let me give you some back story. You see, a few days before our interview I checked the band's MySpace page; only they weren't Bad Dudes anymore. About three or four times a day a new name appeared with a Bad Dude's face. I'm sure I didn't catch them all, but some choice names that I recall were Boyz II Men, The Metallica, and the one that really got them into how-dare-you-even-think-of-joking-about-that hot water: Led Zeppelin. Right before I left for the interview I noticed that their page was gone, and I was convinced Lars Ulrich from Metallica was SpySpacing them—just looking for someone to sue. Turns out Bad Dudes aren't really certain themselves what happened, but they have an idea...

Dan: I was so scared to come to practice today. It was like going to the principal's office. I've had *real* anxiety about it all day.

Kat: Why?

Dan: Because I thought I was going to get killed by these guys.

Daniel: You see, Dan has a really bad internal meter of what is actually going to piss us off. The things that really piss us off, he's like, "What?"

Ben: I'm actually glad. You're the only one that really cares about the MySpace page.

Daniel: Yeah, you're the freak, and you're the wealth of statistics...

Dan: But seriously, in our defense...

[Audible groans from the rest of the band.]

Dan: Our previous record of plays in one day

was 150. And then when we changed our name to Led Zeppelin we got 2,500 plays.

Daniel: And we also got fifty hate mails from people saying things like, "You fags no make music like Zeppelin. They rock, you don't."

Ben: And that was verbatim.

Kat: What's the deal with that other band called Bad Dudes?

Daniel: There's a couple. But this band from Knoxville. They're hardcore. This guy has a tattoo of Bad Dudes on his arm. He puts us to shame. Look at that, dude. They deserve that name.

Ben: I almost changed it back to Bad Dudes the other night. I was looking at it and I was like, "This is so stupid." But I didn't want to be the pussy.

Dan: Dude, people got so angry with the Led Zeppelin. The funniest one was this one guy... everyone used the word faggot. We got, "You guys are fucking fags. This is gay." He was this bro guy from Texas. First he called us fags and then I wrote him back and said, "I was not aware there was another band called Led Zeppelin." Then he like, took me aside...

Ben: Put his arm around you...

Kat: Virtually.

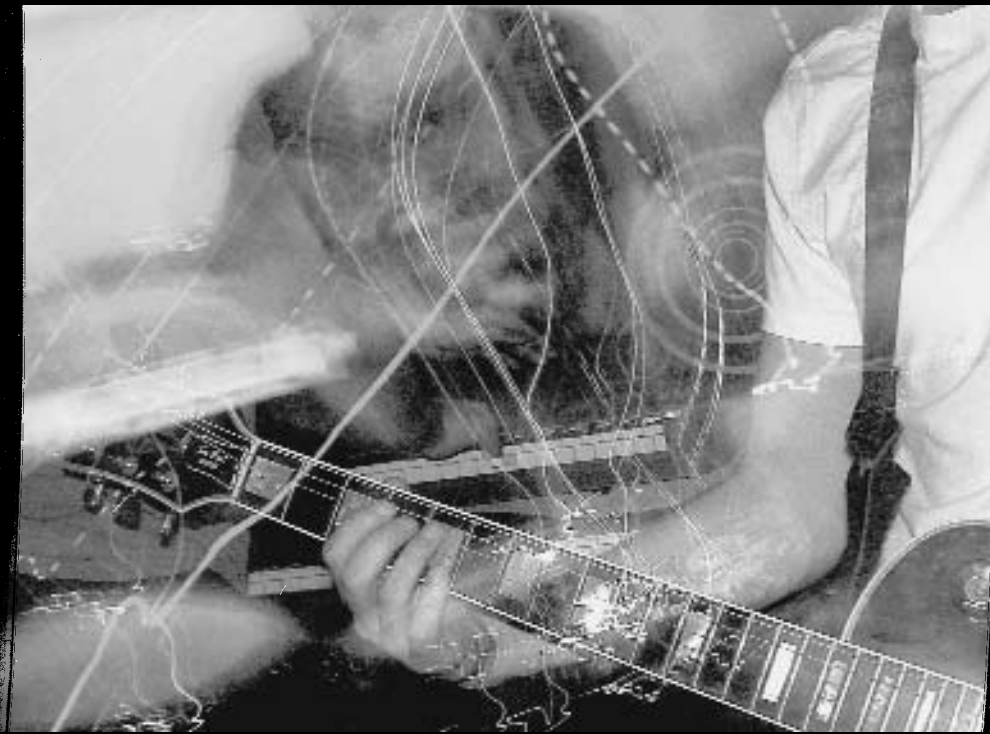
Dan: He was like, "Look man, it's kinda funny. But seriously, gentlemen to gentleman..."

Daniel: Gentleman to gentleman!

Dan: ...musician to musician...

Daniel: You know the deal.

Dan: ...seriously, bro.



Photos by Jon San Agustin

[Everyone's pretty much busting up and laughing over this.]

Dan: I want that to be on our album, or the review of our album.

Daniel: This one girl... It got kind of abrasive. The email said, "You're all going to hell, and fuck you, and here's an animated gif that shows a rabbit getting his ass fucked... That's you—that's your band—and that's me fucking you in the ass."

Brady: Who wrote, "You're fat"?

Ben: That's the response that got us kicked off.

Daniel: Dan wrote her back, "Oh wow, I didn't know there was another band called Led Zeppelin. Are they local? You're fat."

Brady: And she got us kicked off? That's amazing. She wanted it.

Kat: You got the name from that NES Nintendo video game, right?

Dan: Honestly, no.

Brady: We knew it existed.

Dan: I didn't realize the game was that big of a deal and that people would make the reference.

Daniel: I did, and I said it every single time. But it was Marty, wasn't?

Dan: Yeah, it was Marty's idea. Our ex-keyboard player, Marty, was really influential in a lot of things. He designed our logo and stuff.

Kat: And he was in the last incarnation of Miracle Chosuke.

Dan: Is it okay if I go on a little tangent here?

Kat: MySpace rage?

Daniel: Everything Dan says for the next month I'm going to take with a grain of salt. "Oh, you laughed at my joke." That's only because of the MySpace thing.

Dan: We tried out, like, fifteen drummers. Our music is hard, and it's all meter. It

requires a lot of memorization. We actually recorded demos with Brady on drums and he's an excellent drummer. That's a little known fact. So people were working from these MP3s and they're like, "Yeah, I got it." Then they would show up to practice and they would just suck.

Brady: First of all—let me interject—Geoff Kern ruled.

Dan: He was cool.

Daniel: He came up with some great band names. This whole time we were trying to get a drummer we were trying to come up with a band name, too. We literally have a list that I've kept of 578 possible band names.

Dan: You gotta see this.

Daniel: One of which, or even two of which, is Led Zeppelin.

Brady: You have that?! I want that so bad, man.

Kat: That would be so amazing to print in the interview.

Daniel: I wanted to use it for our album cover. You know how some CD covers fold out like, ten times. And just lay out the list sideways 'cause it's so long.

Dan (reading from the list): Thor Is A Homo.

Daniel: Big Smelly Poopy, parenthesis...

Dan and Daniel: ...(I Gotta Take a).

Dan: Long story short, Ben came to practice and he had listened to the MP3s and we were all like, "Who is this chump?" And he knew all the songs and could play them all in the first take.

Brady: Ben came to practice and was probably like, "Who the fuck are these guys?" I was like, "Great to meet you, Ben."

Dan: We were freaked out.

Ben: That was the funniest part—they trying to play it off. I knew as soon I came in... I had, like, drum bags and they were all, "Ooh, chops. Ooh, drum bags."

Kat: "Nice bags." That's a real threat, huh?

Ben: Exactly. And I played and no one says anything, but they're all looking at each other trying not to laugh. So we walk out of the room after a couple of songs and Dan's like, "So, uh, you think you'd like, be interested in staying?"

Daniel: Even when he said that I gave Dan a look like, "Don't blow it."

Ben: And Dan said, "You know, it's not anything like, for sure, but if you want to come back..." I was like, "Yeah, right." You might as well just beg me.

Dan: It was the single best audition.

Brady: I don't know... Some of his high hat work was just so sloppy.

Daniel (going back to the what-could've-been band name list): Ethnic Cuisine. Toxic Beaver. Electric Jivvers. Hot Narcs.

Dan: Hot Narcs is cool cause it's like *21 Jump Street*.

Daniel: Gnarl's in Charge.

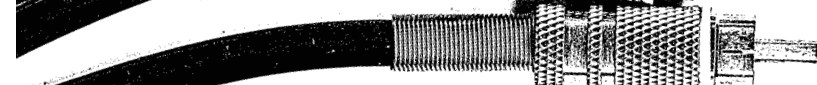
Dan: There's a band now called Gnarl's Barkley.

Daniel: My whole thing was just any name without the word "Dudes." Phil and I just thought it was so stupid.

Ben: One was Golden Swords.

Dan [laughing hysterically]: There's one that's in quotes, "Ironic Quotation Marks." There's also, I Don't Make The Rules, I Don't Break The Rules, I Make The Rules. It's like, I thought you didn't make the rules.

Phil: Was one Endless Jacuzzi?



Ben: There's Boys II Menn with two "Ns" (The Really Crazy Kind), Endless Tunnel of Handjobs.

Dan: Then there's Tunnel of Endless Handjobs, which is [laughing] totally different.

Daniel: We were actually Cabana Boyzz for a little while.

Dan: Dudes, all these names are better than our name.

Daniel: Yeah, that's so true.

Dan: Dude Capades.

Kat: The Mysterious Knights of the Oingo Boingo...

Dan: I just thought the phrase Bad Dudes was infinitely more famous than the game Bad Dudes. Apparently I was wrong.

Daniel: The game sucked, though.

Kat: For a little while Andrew, the drummer of Miracle Chosuke, was singing for you. What happened with that?

Dan: He was just sort of thrust into it. He never really aspired to be a singer.

Brady: He's just one of our best friends and we thought it would be cool.

Kat: Is it hard, though, 'cause there are vocals on half the songs on your record, but when you play live you don't sing. Do people expect there to be vocals live?

Brady: I've had people tell me they like us better live. They like the album, but like us better instrumental.

Dan: It seems it's the first way you're introduced to us. People who have seen us live first don't like the album, and people that hear the album first are bummed out by the live show.

Daniel: They don't really complain, but they always ask, "Are you guys singing yet?"

Kat: I kind of like it because you almost have two totally different bands. If you want to hear lyrics, listen to the album. If you want to hear instrumentals, go see the band live.

Daniel: It's actually intentional because we're preparing ourselves for the time when we're playing arenas and the entire crowd can sing for us. Our vocals would just get in the way. It's funny because I never wanted to be in a band that couldn't pull off live what we did in the studio, unless, maybe, it was the last years of the band and we got tired of touring and just want to make amazing studio albums. It changes when you get in the situation.

Kat: So if you were to go on a stadium tour, what would your live set up consist of?

Phil: I always wanted to do a pole vault. That would be awesome.

Daniel: Yeah, it would be like the Olympics. We'd play the Olympic theme and the Olympic flag would come down behind us and we'd all be wearing shorts.

Dan: It's a bit cliché, but I always enjoy shows that have projection. It's always cool and I never get sick of that.

Kat: So your final answer is Olympic-themed.

Brady: Nooo!

Dan: I know I've talked a lot, but... Band on the run. And I have the whole concept.

Kat (to Brady): You're the one that said you liked the Red Hot Chili Peppers, right?

Brady: I'm right here.

Kat: Did I tell you that when we had the release shows for the *Let's Get Rid of L.A.* comp, Anthony Kiedis showed up but wouldn't pay the \$5.00 to get in?

Brady: That makes me like him even more. I'd do the same thing. "Do you know who the FUCK I am?!"

Kat [to Brady]: You also play in Upsilon Acrux. Are you in that band, or just filling in?

Brady: I'm in it now. I started playing with them like two and a half years ago.

Dan: How long have we been a band?

Daniel: We played our first show January 24, 2004.

Kat: Is it hard to learn twice as many songs?

Brady: It's not a big deal. Just more practice.

Kat: Your album kind of sounds like a rock opera. Like Queensryche's *Operation: Mindcrime* or something. It's got songs titled "Prelude," "Intermission" and "Epilogue"...

Brady: I know what you're talking about—how it sorta flows. But I think if it didn't have those things, you wouldn't really notice it. As far as songs flowing together, it doesn't really feel like one piece.

Dan: We did discuss and spend a lot of time on how to sequence it, but...

Brady: Queensryche, huh?

Dan: That's not a comparison I've ever heard.

Daniel: Never.

Brady: Hey, I'm happy.

Dan: Why can't we ever get compared to cool bands?

Kat: You do.

Daniel: Who do we get compared to?

Kat: Devo.

Dan: I can take that.

Kat: I dunno. Every time I play your music in my car or for someone else they say it sounds like soundtrack music or video game music.

Dan: That sucks.

Brady: It's true, man. Live with it.

Dan: I just don't think we're seriously indebted to one band.

Kat: For your 7" coming out you wanted "still on limo rides" written in the dead wax. What does that mean?

Dan: It's just like our lifestyle.

Brady: Ben's lifestyle.

Dan: Just... that's our mode of transportation.

Brady: 24-7!

Kat: Is it a Hummer limo?

Brady: You know, occasionally. Sometimes we get home and then we ride.

All: Erm...

Brady: What? What's wrong?

Dan: Can you write "audible groan" there?

Kat [to Brady]: Do you want to tell the ladies what you do on a first date?

Brady: Tell the ladies?

Dan: Yeah.

Brady: Fist fuck.

[Everyone laughs.]

Brady: Before and after dinner...

Kat: That'll get the ladies lining up.

Brady: We listen to Bad Dudes and I'm like, "My guitar's on the right side."

Dan: I take 'em to the Olive Garden.

Brady: What about you Daniel?

Daniel: KFC, man.

Kat: So does being in a band ever get you chicks?

Dan: No.

Brady: Easy answer. No.

Dan: I've never scored a chick from being in a band.

Kat: C'mon! So no, "Hey, I'm in a band."

Dan: We're in Bad Dudes. It's like Led Zeppelin are Hammer of the Gods, and we're Pocket Protector of the Gods.

Kat: What do you think is one of the most disappointing things one of your musical idols has done? For instance, some people are bummed that Iggy Pop's song *Lust for Life* is used for a Carnival cruise commercial.

Dan: Dude's finally getting paid well after the fact doesn't really bother me. They struggled and they should get some kind of compensation.

Daniel: You know what bothers me? And he's not even an idol of mine... The guitarist from Rage Against the Machine...

All: Tom Morello.

Daniel: Like, him being the Guitar Center cutout and seen in all these corporate ads. It just bothers me when someone bases their entire image on "Fuck the corporate..." Isn't that going to confuse people?

Ben: I just hate watching the Stones play. For some reason when you get old, your voice goes away, your chops go away, you don't look cool in leather pants... You just look like an old fart.

Ben: I'm sure they know they look like idiots, but they want to sell records. That's the worst part. I guarantee you that the Stones know they're just a bunch of old farts out on stage, but they're making fifty million dollars per year and they just play "Brown Sugar" or whatever.

Daniel: I don't know about that, dude. I think they probably have enough money where they don't have to do it anymore.

Dan: I think Keith Richards really enjoys himself. I think that's who he is. He just doesn't have much quality.

Ben: Dude, I've been in a band for two years—we don't have any hits—and I'm already tired of playing the songs. They've been playing those songs for sixty-five years. You can't tell me he just wants to get up there and "rock and roll."

BAD DUDES

We got fifty hate mails from people saying things like, "You fags no make music like Zeppelin. They rock, you don't."... and that was verbatim.



Photo by Jessica Miller

Dan: I've read interviews where he keeps on pushing the tour.

Ben: I'm sure they love music, but I refuse to believe they enjoy playing the same songs over and over.

Dan: For that much money, who can begrudge them that?

Daniel: You see, the thing about Bad Dudes is that we have a unified vision. We just agree on *everything*. It's so easy in this band.

Dan: I'm just saying, if you like playing music and you're still interested in playing music, I don't think there should be an age where you have to retire. I think that's really gross. Running the risk of sounding lame, we have a totally have a youth-obsessed culture. Why can't fifty or sixty-year-olds participate in pop culture? Everything is geared for that narrow demographic. People beyond that demographic have money, opinions, and enjoy things. When Neil Young was twenty, he sang songs about being twenty. And now that he's in his sixties, he's writing song about being sixty. For me, that totally works. I'm sure for people in that age group they can completely relate to it, and that music can have that same resonance.

Ben: I watched an old *Saturday Night Live* with Bowie from about ten years ago...

Dan: Bowie's aged well.

Ben: He has, but every dude in his band hasn't! His guitar playing was wearing tight pleather pants and I just thought it was so sad.

Daniel: Is he playing with the same guys?

Ben: I think he is. It's like, change, man.

Dan: But why does he have to sell out his bros 'cause they're fat?

Ben: I'm not saying that. But, why can't they just be old men? Why can't they just wear a suit?

Dan: I don't disagree with that. Old people trying to be young people—it's gross and it's sad, but young people... I think Sonic Youth are a great example. They're approaching their fifties and they write great songs. The Rolling Stones are a bad example of that, but they're getting *paid*.

Kat: Have you heard about the Germs movie? Lorna Doom came out of seclusion or retirement or whatever to play Germs shows with an actor playing Darby Crash. That bummed me out.

Dan: My opinion of that is, sure the legend of the Germs is suffering, but here's a person who was instrumental and creating the legend of the Germs and if she chooses to get hers way after the fact because she had the courage to be in the Germs at that time—sure. I don't think it's a bad thing that she had to sacrifice a bit of the legend for all of us so she can get a little bit of notoriety and money. I think people are so preoccupied with their idols being less now, but it's just a bunch of never was-es being bummed out that their idols are less than being great. What's the big deal?

Daniel: The big deal is that music is a commodity and you want to own that mystique.

Ben: That's always the problem with people crying sell out. Being in a band is not easy...

Dan: It's your personal decision to stay consistent with your beliefs and to say these aren't my beliefs anymore. For me, to get all

up in arms would be petty. And all these people bitching about the Germs—they never saw the Germs. They don't belong to you. They belong to her and her band. Do I think it's sad? Yeah, totally. If I were in that position, would I hope I wouldn't do it? Yeah.

Ben: I read that the actor playing him (Shane West) went out and got all the same tattoos as Darby Crash.

Dan: That's a pretty ballsy move.

Daniel: Then that guy's sadder than anyone else in the Germs—pretending to be somebody he's not.

Kat: If you won a musical award, what would it be for, and what would you say at the podium?

Brady: Most pretentious piece-of-shit-worst-band-in-L.A.-oh-my-god-they-got-kicked-off-of-MySpace-and-no-one-noticed Award goes to...

Ben: What would you say after that award, dude?

Brady: "Mr. Miller couldn't be here. He's at the John Frusciante tribute concert crying, Ben is snorting coke, Cobb is thinking about weird shit with his thumb in his butt..."

Daniel: Well, there you go.

Dan: People are going to think we're the biggest fucking idiots ever.

Brady: Well, they're going to be dead-on.

Dan: Feel free to edit this to make us seem like not totally douche bags.



I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I'M INCAPABLE OF NOSTALGIA.

I don't pine for days passed. Maybe it's because I've been neck-deep in making something new with my hands full-time for the last ten years. Perhaps it's that I've never expected someone or something else—a band, a deity, a pre-described belief system, a specific scene at a rarefied time—to save my life. I take music for what it is: a wonderful way to interact with the world. It's a great way to let off some steam and spazz out. A great way, if you're careful enough, to get a fresh bit of understanding and find like-minded folks to share time with.

It doesn't hurt that I'm a little retarded. My memory's bad. Concussions have taken their toll. My eyes still widen when I hear a band that electrifies me. Such a band that's fired me up lately is Gorilla Angreb. They're Danish. I have no idea what they're singing about. Their singles hooked me and their 12" EP, *Bedre Tider*, became one of those compulsive pieces of vinyl that I flipped over and over to hear it again and again, louder, closer to my ears. It's "back to the beginning to tap the source, but bring your own ammunition and fireworks to the picnic" style punk. They take the radioactive, embryonic elements that got smashed together in a big way in 1977 and then cage, molest, taunt, and whip those influences into their own shaking monster. What you get is great songs, revved-up, full of tension, attack, and release. There's actual singing. There's real guitar work. There's absolute craft folded into a comforting amount of simplicity and raw touch. Humans making great music: that's what this is all about.

Interview by Todd Taylor
Photos by Alexander Krone
(except where noted)
Original artwork by Art Fuentes

Mai—Vocals
Simon Retardo—Bass
Tommas—Drums
Peter—Guitar, vocals

Todd: How is it that a band from Denmark, thousands and thousands of miles away, has tapped directly into the vein of music that was played in my backyard of L.A., almost thirty years ago? I mean, okay, X, is the easy one, but you've got traces of The Plugz, The Gears, The Brat, The Bags, The Zeros—not technically, L.A., but closer to L.A. than Denmark. And it seems that Gorilla Angreb has been able to pick up the smallest details. Is old L.A. punk like a treasure map to Gorilla Angreb?

Tommas: Hmm. Well, we didn't exactly just sit down and agree to copy one certain band for our sound. But yeah, I guess it shines through that we all love old punk rock and yes, there were quite a few great bands from the early L.A. scene and it doesn't bother me that people compare us to some of those bands. I'm just getting sick of the X comparison all the time, so I'm glad you mentioned The Zeros, which we actually used to cover—"Don't Push Me Around"—and a personal L.A. favorite of mine, The Brat, which not many people seem to know about. At least not in Europe. L.A. is definitely not a treasure map to Gorilla Angreb. There's a lot of other inspiration to our songs.

Todd: What are some of the less obvious inspirations, then?

Tommas: Less obvious influences are various '60s and early '70s bands. We all dig MC5, Sonics, Stooges and that sort of stuff.

Todd: It's funny that you mention The Brat not being that well known. I think it has to do with a couple of things. They weren't on a "biggie" punk rock Southern California label—like Dangerhouse or Posh Boy. They were on Fatima—run by Tito Larriva of the Plugz—and secondly, that 12" was super hard to find pretty soon after it was released. So, I pose this question: do you want Gorilla Angreb to follow in similar footsteps? A lot of your vinyl seems to be for sale for a couple of months, then be completely sold out. Do you want to keep Gorilla Angreb a bit of a secret?

Tommas: I'd like Gorilla Angreb records to be available all the time. But, sometimes, it's been very hard to make this possible, as some of the releases have been quite popular and we've had problem keeping up with the demand, mainly because I haven't had the time to do so properly. But, in theory, I want our records to be available, and it helps that we have had our records released in the U.S., too now, by Feral Ward. Our discography CD is gonna be released both in Europe by myself (Hjernesvind) and Japan (Too Circle) soon, so we're definitely trying *not* to be a well-kept secret, but to get the music out there to people who'd dig it.

Todd: Is there any truth that Peter—vocals and guitar—is the brains behind Gorilla Angreb, much like some claim he was the brains behind Amdt Petersens Armé?







AS A KID HE WAS CAUGHT GRAFFITI-ING TRAINS AND HAD TO SPEND A YEAR IN JUVENILE PRISON BECAUSE OF IT.

Tommas: Yes, it's true Peter writes most of the Gorilla Angreb songs. I come up with a song here and there, but since I'm not a guitarist, he obviously comes up with better stuff than what I'm capable of and he writes most lyrics, too. But he's not really like a dictator. Everybody's ideas are listened to and we all have an equal say. Peter is behind most of the music, but as far as being the brain behind the band, I think there's more to it than just the music. I've released all the records and set up or coordinated most tours. Simon is in charge of printing up our T-shirts and badges and stuff and is the most skilled in the band to lay finishing touches on cover art in Photoshop. So I'd like to see the brain behind the band to be a combined effort. In Amdi Petersens Armé, Peter and Ras—APA drummer, Young Wasteners singer—wrote probably 50/50 of the songs.

Todd: The artwork I've come across from Gorilla Angreb is striking. The logos associated with the band make sense and are exciting without being clichéd. Why gorillas?

Tommas: The name of the band translates into Gorilla Attack, so I guess photos of angry Gorillas smashing things are hard *not* to use, as lots of these photos or drawings are very cool. I imagine Gorilla Biscuits,

Gorillas and all those other bands with "gorilla" in their name had the same "problem" with always ending up using gorillas on covers and logos. T-shirt designs are normally pretty easy to go about. One of us has an idea and we try it out. If it works it works. If not, we skip it. Most of the time, it just works first shot.

Todd: Have you ever thought, "Fuck. That's a great gorilla. I want to use that drawing."?

Tommas: Yes, personally I stumbled upon several cool gorillas that we just had to use—the cover from *Aborted 2000 E.P.* and the demo cover.

Todd: Mai worked in a comic store. Has that affected how the band represents itself in flyers, posters, and record jackets?

Tommas: No, not really. The insert for the first 7" was done by Mai, so yeah, maybe she was inspired by the comics surrounding her at the time in that process, but, in general, this hasn't had an impact on how we represent ourselves.

Todd: I especially want to hear about part of the creative process behind the photo shoot for *Bedre Tider*, the one with the small dog and the person who's hung themselves.



Tommas: Record covers are more painful and hard to finish. In the beginning, we all met and sat down and did the cover together, but it could take forever and be “almost finished” for months, instead of just sitting down and figuring out how it should look and then simply just do it! The last few covers were done faster though, so I hope we learned something along the way. Personally, I think it’s better with just one person having the idea and putting the cover together, instead of being the whole band there all the time. Things take a lot longer to finish that way. And I think it’s still possible for everybody to have their say this way. The idea with the *Bedre Tider* cover was Peter’s idea. He wanted this nice and cosy family portrait of the band and then have a guy hanging in the background from a tree. I think the cover turned out really cool. I was a bit curious as to how this cover would be received. A lot of punks here in Copenhagen hate it, but I heard from more people than what I expected that they think the cover is awesome. So I guess you either hate it or you love it.

Todd: How did Mai get approached to be in Gorilla Angreb, because I don’t think she’s been in any other band prior.

Tommas: Mai was asked to join the band as we needed a singer and Peter had just met her at this drawing school that both of them attended. It’s true that she wasn’t in any other band prior to Gorilla Angreb.

Todd: Please tell the story of being on a flatbed truck and getting busted by the cops in the middle of your first song... what’s Ungdomshuset?

Tommas: Ungdomshuset is a huge volunteer-run house in Copenhagen that was given to the squatter movement in the early ‘80s by the city hall. It’s been a center for the punk scene since then and is still a very important place for the scene in Copenhagen. Most bands either practice there or did in the past—ourselves included—and there’s tons of shows there, soup kitchens, a recording studio—first APA, first GA, Asbest 7”s and Hjertestop 7”s are recorded here—and other cool shit going on there. The house is pretty much open for everybody who has ideas on what to do with the space there. The house has been facing eviction for some years now, and the incident with us being arrested was at a happening for the house. We set up all equipment on the back of a truck and blocked the traffic during rush hour at one of the streets with the most traffic in Copenhagen. What happened was that after literally thirty seconds, the cops pulled the plug on us and wanted to arrest us. We put the plug back in and continued playing but, of course, ended up getting arrested. [laughs]

Todd: What was the genesis for your record company?

Tommas: My Kick N’ Punch partner-in-crime Jakob and I started the label in 1999 when a local scene with some really great bands started to build up. There weren’t really any punk record labels in Denmark at that time, so we filled the gap, so to speak, and started the label with a main focus on the local scene. And then the great bands kept coming out of the woodwork here, so we just kept on releasing records.

Todd: Coming from a very liberal country, are there any concessions Danish bands can get from the government to help subsidize musicians such as yourselves?

Tommas: Yes, there are a few organizations you can scam some financial support from, but they’re not government-supported, just organizations that support Danish bands going abroad. I guess this is a Scandinavian thing, as I haven’t heard about this happening anywhere else in the world. I think it would be pretty stupid not to take advantage of this possibility.

Todd: I don’t really comment on a band’s tattoos that often, but Simon has extravagant tattoos on his arms and hands—and by the looks of it—all over his body. Does that make border crossings more difficult?

Simon: No, there haven’t really been any problems crossing borders. Normally, they just comment the tattoos with things like, “Does it hurt?” “How many do you have?” “Do you regret having them made?” Everybody in the band has a really high IQ, so we can talk our way out of everything [laughs]. When we go to the U.S., we always travel in two or three groups, that way we don’t look like a band.

Todd: What do the tattoos mean? Are they purely decorative?

Simon: I have made the “designs” myself. They are all gang related. That’s really all I can say. And, of course, they look cool.

Todd: I’ve been reading about working weeks and social reform. Denmark always comes out near the top. Is it true that most Danish people have a thirty-five-hour work week?

Tommas: Actually, things over here are getting worse. We have a conservative right wing-supported government in Denmark at the moment. They definitely made life harder for unemployed people, immigrants, old people, and students the last four or five years. So, I’d say it’s definitely going the wrong way over here. But, compared to the U.S., I’d say things are definitely better here. We still have free health insurance for all citizens. The fact that it’s *not* free to get treatment by a doctor or go to the hospital blows my mind. I guess this is a thing we should really appreciate. We also have free schools and free education for everybody and you even get money from the state while you’re going to school when you’re



WE SET UP ALL EQUIPMENT ON THE BACK OF A TRUCK AND BLOCKED THE TRAFFIC DURING RUSH HOUR AT ONE OF THE STREETS WITH THE MOST TRAFFIC IN COPENHAGEN.

over eighteen years old—not a lot—but enough to get by if you live a simple life. But as I said, it started to get worse here and I think they will gradually weaken these services and principles for the future. A normal work week over here is thirty-seven hours. The last job I had was only thirty hours a week. I'd rather work less and have more time to do what I like, but I know this is not possible for everybody, as you obviously get paid less than working full time. But, I guess if you have a job that you like, I wouldn't mind working more hours either.

Todd: Without boasting—and since you've travelled quite a bit in your bands—what do you think the rest of the world could learn by Denmark's example? What is the significance of not being part of the European Union and not using the Euro?

Tommas: Personally, I'm against the EU. I don't think it's the right solution to push away decisions from our small country to Brussels. It's hard for me to go into depth with this subject as English is not my first language, so I won't, since it's a complex issue. Since Denmark voted no to the Euro, we still have Danish Crowns here. And, yeah, I can see the argument about making it easier doing the labels with the same currency in all Europe, but I'd still prefer to stick to the Crown. I just don't see the point in having all countries look the same. And this is just a part of that.

Todd: Have any of Gorilla Angreb's parents helped the band?

Tommas: Yeah, my parents have been to some shows and got all the records, of course. When I started out playing in bands fifteen years ago, they were really supportive, and still are. My first bands actually rehearsed at this school my father works at as a teacher. He basically just

gave us the key to go to the school and use the space and the equipment there. Cool, as it would have been impossible to find another rehearsal space in the small town I come from. Also, the first Gorilla Angreb demo tape was recorded in a small cabin in the middle of nowhere that belongs to my parents. So, yeah, I guess my folks have been really supportive. I know the others' parents have been to shows too and, actually, we just played at Mai's mother's birthday party, which was funny as it was definitely something different. The guests there even seemed to enjoy it.

Todd: Name one non-punk-rock movie that you think every punk rocker should see and why they should see it.

Tommas: *Reptilicus*: a horrible attempt at doing a horror movie in Denmark in the '60s. They should watch it since it's just hilarious and funny; definitely not scary. That's for sure.

Todd: Do any of you have any hobbies or obsessions that people may not equate with punk rock?

Tommas: Yeah. I'm into football! And that's European football—soccer—for you Americans. The World Cup just started and I think I, in the last three days, I saw seven or eight games on the TV. I was always into many different sports as a kid. I still have a closet at my parent's house full of medals and trophies from my time as a table tennis player. When I got older, my musical interest gradually replaced the sports thing. I still play football once in a while, but kinda gave up on the table tennis. I don't really have the time to do it. People might say sports are not punk rock, but I don't give a fuck. Do what you want. I collect records too, but I'm not really the collector scum type, as there seem to be quite a few of.



Photo by Terri Meuse

HE WANTED THIS NICE AND COZY FAMILY PORTRAIT OF THE BAND AND THEN HAVE A GUY HANGING IN THE BACKGROUND FROM A TREE.

I'm not fanatical, I just appreciate great records, and, of course, I'd want them in my own collection if it's great stuff. Simon is collecting *Bip-bip spil*. That's a Danish term for old portable videogames. I'm sure Mai is collecting all kinds of crazy stuff, but as we speak, I'm not really sure what. Peter's a bad-ass graffiti artist. As a kid he was caught doing trains and had to spend a year in juvenile prison because of it. That's where he first got into the drug thing he was later known for doing hard time for, too. I'm glad he's into punk rock now and in this band. I'm not sure where he would have been if not for the band. He's still into graffiti and can often be spotted in the yard behind the central station. Peter played a minor role, too, in the classic European skateboard movie *Achtung!! Skate Mit Uns*, where Jens from No Hope For The Kids also got his claim to fame. Peter is the guy in the end doing the breakdancing naked—wearing only white gloves—while Jens is fucking flying in the air above him on his skateboard. Amazing!

Todd: Since you've been intimately involved with doing records for seven years, what have you seen as being the biggest change the DIY punk rock you're involved with?

Tommas: Hmm. I think old-styled hardcore punk and just simple punk rock has made a comeback, which is cool. There are definitely more good bands sticking to the roots of punk musically these days than when we started out with Kick N' Punch. It also seems it's a lot easier now for European bands to make it over to tour in the U.S. In 1999, you didn't

really hear of any Euro bands touring the U.S. Now, there's a lot more, and I think that's great and about time, especially considering how many American bands are touring Europe all the time. Many of these bands are good and have been working hard for years as a band, but it also seems that there are shitloads of mediocre bands that take advantage of the great European DIY network, and just set out to tour over here before actually having any records out or with just one 7" released.

Todd: Name one thing you're specifically aiming to accomplish with the band that you haven't yet, but you think is really, really close.

Tommas: Going to Japan. We have our CD coming out over there now on Too Circle Records, and we're trying to figure out when in 2007 we can go over there and play. It seems like Shingo of Too Circle is gonna set up the tour as well, but not totally certain yet. I was playing in Japan in 2003 with my other band Intensity and it was great! I wanna go back, and right now it seems like we're really close with Gorilla Angreb.

Gorilla Angreb

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The Tim Version

and Dukes Of Hillsborough

**U.K. Public
Transportation
Tour 2005**

**Written by Russ Van Cleave
Artwork by Art Fuentes
Photos courtesy of the bands**

I'm not sure where I first heard the expression, "The road is better than the inn," but it certainly is a poignant enough quote. I suppose it is really just an elegant way of stating that while life may not always make things comfortable for the participant, it certainly doesn't reward the passive observer. This was the underlying philosophy behind the mutual decision made by members of The Tim Version and The Dukes Of Hillsborough when we collectively said, "fuck it," and took off for England in late April, largely uninvited, mostly unannounced, with equipment arrangements that amounted to one guitar, a handful of possible shows, and no transportation plans.

The players were as follows: Jeff, Travis, and Phil of the Dukes Of Hillsborough, Shawn, Scott, Mike, and myself from The Tim Version and Dan, our road crew of one who signed up early on to deal with whatever wrath might be unleashed by a vengeful U.K. Tour God. Shows were sorta confirmed—Brighton, Newport, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Middlesborough, Leeds, and Derby. Transportation looked promising. Equipment was on the verge of being borrowed. In short, things were lookin' good, so pennies were saved and plane tickets were purchased, thus establishing the point of no return. Of course, shortly after that things began to go sour. A clerical error of sorts rendered the van we were gonna use unavailable until May 6th which really didn't line up too well with



our April 30th arrival date. Equipment got scarce as well, and ultimately, shows, at one time sorta in place, started to fall through. It wasn't anyone's fault necessarily. It's just how we've always rolled. Hell, in the U.S., where some cancelled shows are nothing more than a couple days off and an extra tank of gas out of your pocket, it ain't no big deal. But in the U.K., with no equipment, no shows, no transportation, no way to recoup on your \$500 airfare... well, you do the math. But the bold letters that spelled out "NO REFUNDS" and "NON-TRANSFERABLE" emblazoned on the tickets purchased with the credit card belonging to one Travis Malloy meant we were going come hell or high water—tour or no tour.

Day 1: April 30th

Prior to our arrival, Buz had asked us if we had a place to stay the first night since he would be out of town. I told him we'd manage something. We spent a good part of the afternoon trying just that, but failed to find hostels or cheap hotels that weren't booked solid for the day. I called Buz, but since he was in London with The Briefs, there wasn't much he could do, so I asked him if there were any laws against sleeping on

the beach. After he laughed and said, "No, it's okay, but be careful," I thanked him and told him we'd meet up with him tomorrow. We weren't able to find anyone to stay with at the pub but someone who worked there was able to get all eight of us on the guest list for an Isis show at a club on the beach that night!

Although Phil was way into it, I just wasn't feeling Isis too much. It was probably just the fact that I hadn't slept in thirty-six hours, but for whatever reason, a few of us decided to head down to the beach and set up camp while I went to purchase provisions. When I got back, everyone was gathered around a fire with some Brighton locals who had invited Shawn and company over when he went to ask them where to get wood for a fire of our own. Unfortunately, I have absolutely no recollection of their names but they were very friendly people who were killing time on the beach waiting for an all-night party to start up at the club we were just in. So we drank and talked. At one point one of the girls mentioned that she'd "offer up her flat if it wasn't such a mess." Considering our current lodgings, I don't think we would've cared but we were having fun so we didn't really pursue it.

Normally, this would have been the end of day one. But it wasn't. Shawn woke me up out of a deep, deep sleep

and told me to get my shit 'cause it was raining and we were moving because it was getting really cold and wet. We eventually made camp on the sidewalk, under an overhang beside the club, and went back to sleep.

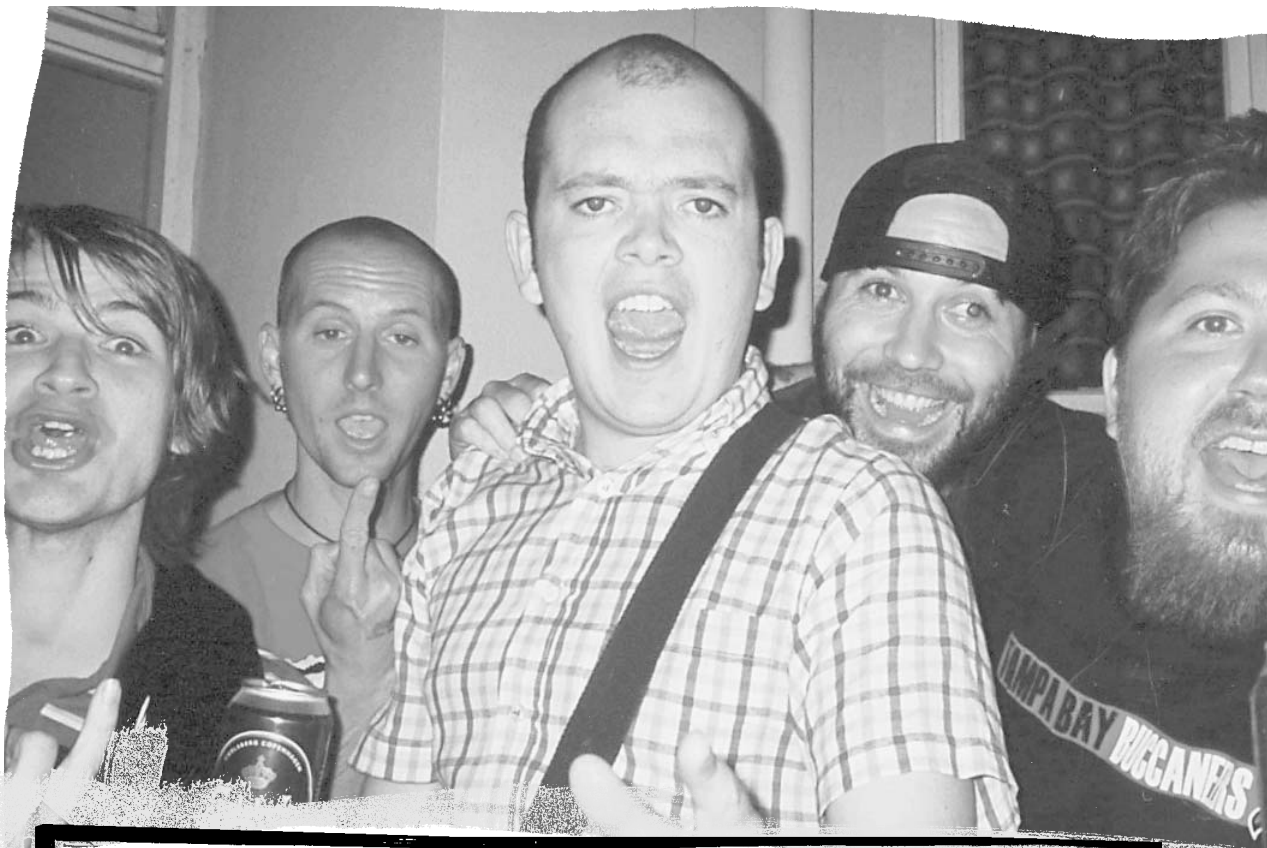
Day 2: May 1st



After a really cheap picnic lunch featuring weird-flavored potato chips in a park next to a church, we went to the The Hobgoblin for our first scheduled show on our U.K. tour! We totally lucked out and managed to get Buz to put us on a show he booked for The Briefs and a band called Spooky from Japan. Of course, we showed up with our nothing save Jeff's guitar and a bag of pedals and cables. Thusly, we set about trying to wrangle something to use with which we could eek out a performance for the good people of Brighton. Fortunately, there were some really nice bands from the area playing that night (The Bad Fucks, The Ass Rockets, and another band that I can't



"Backstage" at the Brighton Beach Party (l to r) Russ, Shawn, Jeff, Travis (deli tray inside sleeping bag)



We may be a bunch of unorganized, alcoholic, stubborn idiots...

(l to r) Drunk and Spitting, Drunk and Number One, Drunk and Screaming, Drunk and Happy, Drunk and Drunk

for the life of me remember) who were more than happy to help us secure the necessary instrumentation. The noise we followed up with didn't go so bad and The Dukes sounded good as well. We all got some free BBQ off the patio out back and set up to watch Spooky and The Briefs. Scott almost got his ass kicked by a bunch of Australians who were visiting to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli¹. He accidentally shook a table that had one of their beers on it and it almost spilled; the consequences of such being that one of the Australian dudes grabbed him by the shirt and threatened his life. Keep in mind, these were big, scary Australian guys who were visiting, presumably to somehow rub it in the face of a country whose actions sent tens of thousands of their countrymen off to their deaths. Dan, who had befriended them earlier, was able to smooth the whole thing over and Scott remained here with us among the living. I wanted to interview the

Australian dudes about their trip and to find out what made them so intense, but they left before I got a chance.

Day 4: May 3rd



We got a van today! Holy shit! Tour! We walked down to the Choice Rentals place by Nick's house where they informed us that we would have to pick it up from the Choice Rentals on the other end of town. No problem. Me, Travis, and Dan set out to the other side of Brighton and agreed to meet up at Buz's shop later. It was a pretty hefty walk but no one seemed to mind. After

about an hour or so, we ended up at the other First Choice where we filled out all the necessary paperwork. They brought the van around and showed us some of the finer features before we got in. Travis is an experienced van driver and we figured it best to have him tackle the whole driving on the other side of the road issue. So, I sat in the passenger seat (which would normally be the driver side seat in the U.S.) on the way back over to Buz's shop. I kept freakin' out and tellin' Trav to move over toward the other side so we didn't sideswipe any parked cars or kill any pedestrians. He kept tellin' me that the roads were too narrow. Then we broke the passenger side mirror after clipping a construction dumpster. Whoops. It still worked; it just didn't look so good anymore. We made it back to Buz's shop without further incident.

By the time we got out of town, we had almost managed to master navigat-

1. This was a really fucked-up campaign to capture a Turkish peninsula that took place in WWI. Soldiers from Australia and New Zealand were sent to face the brunt of the assault from the Turkish defenses and suffered horrendous casualties. In fact, the high number

of casualties resulting from the campaign played a significant role in Australia's and New Zealand's movements for independence. The last song on The Pogues' *Rum, Sodomy and the Lash* is about a guy who loses his legs in that battle..



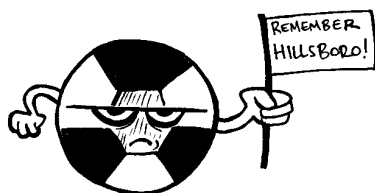
Russ versus something boiled then deep fried.

...but it doesn't change the fact that all of us good friends spent almost two weeks in a place we'd never been to before...

ing the roundabouts². Nonetheless, I still feared for my life on the narrow roads and the idea of driving through the hills at night wasn't much of a stellar idea. We weren't far from the town of Bath. We didn't know anything about Bath, but Scott's little book said it was a big tourist spot so we thought we might be able to find a hostel or something to stay in. We should have been a little bit concerned when the van stalled and we had to coast into a parking lot behind a school or something in Bath, but of course being the idiots we are, we didn't think much of it. It was time to see what Bath had to offer. Aside from snobs,

creepers, and expensive beer, Bath didn't have much so we slept in the van.

Day 5: May 4th



We pulled into Liverpool in the late afternoon and after some difficulty, finally found Heaven and Hell. The club had an upper level, Heaven, and a lower level, Hell, and this night we would be playing in Heaven with Flamingo 50 and a band whose name has eluded my memory. We met Matiss, who had set up the show for us. He explained to us that, when he made the flyer, he made sure to put "FROM THE U.S." next to us and the Dukes so no one would think we were making fun of the soccer riot. In Brighton, we found out there was an incident at the Hillsboro Stadium in Liverpool where ninety people died when a section of the stands collapsed during a soccer game some years ago³. Considering that Jeff, Travis, and Phil played in a band called The Dukes Of Hillsborough, we were a little concerned that we might get our asses kicked by some crazy football hooligans. Matiss assured us that we probably wouldn't get fucked with, but just in case he indicated on the flyer that we were ignorant Americans. Liverpool is a tough city; sorta like the Detroit of England. The only difference being everybody here is polite and sounds like one of The Beatles when they talk. No joke. In fact, the only trouble we got from the locals that night was an incident wherein Dan got called an "orange bastard" by some random dude while he was using the internet booth⁴. Nobody knew what that meant, but Matiss said it

was probably a religious thing which didn't bother Dan any.

The show that night was a pretty damn good one as far as I was concerned. It sucks I can't remember the name of the first band that played because they were really good and when we found out it was only their third or fourth show it was even more impressive. Flamingo 50 was totally amazing. They were also kind enough to let us use their equipment for our shows. It was only our second show in the U.K., but everything went well and folks seemed to enjoy both bands.

2. Roundabouts are these big circles you use to turn a corner instead of actually just turning the normal American way—don't ask me why they use 'em (the only reason I can think of is that you don't necessarily have to stop, you can just yield instead), but our first attempt at moving through one was scarier than *The Exorcist* and a successful maneuver by Travis was met with resounding applause from all passengers.

3. There's actually a memorial dedication to the victims of the incident in the liner notes to the Pogues *Peace and Love* CD. This is the second footnote I've written that refers to something The Pogues have done.

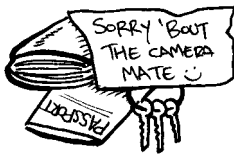
4. They have the internet in booths over there. The future is here for England. It's like *Doctor Who*! Still waiting for the future in the U.S.

Travis embracing his inner Bon Jovi.



...saw bands we would have otherwise never seen, had some amazing experiences...

Day 6: May 5th



Needless to say, morning came a little later than usual. Travis came in shortly after everyone was just up and asked, "Does anyone know why a bunch of our shit is underneath the van?"

"Whatdya mean?"

"I mean there's a bunch of shit under the van. Jeff's guitar, the bass Nick gave us, and some other shit. And one of the doors is open."

Yep. Someone broke into the van the previous night whilst we were getting wasted and passing out. They went through just about everything, but only took my really nice camera. No CDs, no instruments, no other personal affects. My stomach sank when I real-

ized my passport, wallet, and keys were in my camera bag. I was on the verge of intense frustration until someone found them stashed in one of the merch bags. I guess the thief or thieves were polite enough to remove them before absconding with my camera bag. Like I've mentioned before, they certainly weren't short on courtesy over there.

Matiss filed a report with the police for me while we tried to figure out what to do with our day off. Originally, we were supposed to play a show in Edinburgh, Scotland, but it fell through. We threatened to go up there and check it out any way, but we made the wise decision to spend the day in Liverpool instead. It was really unfortunate that we couldn't make the trip but with a tight budget and a van of questionable reliability it didn't seem like a very prudent venture. Instead, we spent the day wandering around between various tourist type attractions in Liverpool. We went to the Cavern Club where Lemmy Kilmeister saw the Beatles play⁵. We went to an old cathedral that got bombed out during WWII.

We saw a propeller from the Lusitania. We rode one of those double decker buses. We ate Moroccan food. We wandered around Chinatown (Liverpool got one of dem too). All in all, it was a full day. We also tried to go a museum but it closed early (everything over there closed early). We also went to the largest Anglican Cathedral in the world. They started building the sucker in something like 1902 and finished it in 1970! It was immense! The security guard told us that they hired a young architect to oversee the project in hopes that he'd live to see its completion and that a lot of money was donated by rich folks in an attempt to "hedge their bets, so to speak." And right-wing conservatives are worried about the future of Christ in our society! Seems pretty fuckin' solid to me if they'll spend millions of dollars and the better part of a century building a house for him. It's also amusing to note that one of the priests invited Travis to participate in mass to which he responded, "No thanks, I'm Catholic."

5. I know The Cavern Club is better known as the place where the Beatles played their first show, but Lemmy saw the Beatles play a lot of early shows there and that is often overlooked piece of rock histo-

ry as far as I'm concerned. He watched John Lennon leave the stage to punch a guy out when he called him a queer. It's in his autobiography *White Line Fever* if you wanna read it!

...and met and hung out with some downright incredible people...

Day 8: May 7th

We pulled up to the venue and ironed out all the kinks in our now-crumpled bodies and went inside for a beer. Andrew had taken the liberty of preparing some beans and rice for us. Of the shows we had booked on this tour, this one, with a lineup consisting of Blocko, Driveway Speeding, and The Swords (who, although I hadn't heard before tonight, were really amazing as well), was the one I was most looking forward to and it didn't disappoint. The bittersweet part of the whole night was the fact that this was Blocko's second-to-last show. I also finally got to meet Mates, who was not only a super nice guy, but also looked like an older version of Shawn and played the drums. Odd, no doubt. Mates also told us that his buddy Sean Forbes said he could get us a show at the Windmill in Brixton if we wanted.

"Sean Forbes?"

"Yea... Sean Forbes."

"Like the dude who did Rugger Bugger Records⁶ and played in Wat Tyler?"

"Yea... he's right famous he is,"

Mates responded with a dry, sarcastic humor that many Britons are known for.

So thanks to Sean and whatever illegal activities he had performed to get us on the bill, we had another show! The bill was already filled up with Chixdiggit, The Griswalds⁷, The Dangerfields, and The Random Heroes (whom we had met in Brighton), so he couldn't get the Dukes on, but he had secured a spot for us to open up the show with a twenty minute set. Certainly, good enough for us! Thanks Sean!

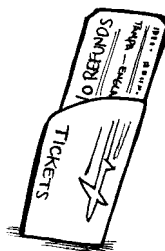
Day 10: May 9th

This was a hangover morning for certain. We eventually got everything together, though, and the dudes from the Derby Collective offered to walk us down to the train station. It was about a mile or so walk. I don't mind walking,

but it sorta sucked having to carry all of our equipment and merchandise with us. Fortunately, the dudes in the collective were there to help us out. We got another killer deal on train tickets, thanks to group discounts, grabbed a quick bite to eat, and said goodbye to the dudes in the collective before we headed down to the platform. The ride back to London was nice and I stopped to reflect on the different modes of transportation we had utilized on our tour thus far. Airplanes, vans, taxis, and, now, trains. It was certainly the first time that any of us had ever gone from one show to the next by train and it was definitely living up to the jokes we had made prior to leaving about it being billed as the "Dukes Of Hillsborough Tim Version U.K. Public Transportation Tour 2005." I'm sure that Steve Martin and John Candy would be proud.

When we got into London, we left one station for the other to catch the tube out to Picadilly Circus where Jamie, Lindsey, Tara, (all significant others to Travis, Shawn, and Scott, respectively) and Shannon (another friend of ours) were waiting. The plan was for several of our party to fly to Ireland and spend a few more days just hanging out and relaxing at the back end of our trip. When's the next time you're gonna be in England, right?! We got to Picadilly station and got forced out into the rain by some guy selling newspapers while we stood on the corner waiting for Travis to get hotel room accommodations together with the ladies. You see, we've learned through experience, as I'm sure most touring bands have, that if you're gonna get a hotel room, you only send one guy up to take care of business whilst the others stay hidden, lest they try and slap extra fees on you, or worse, force you to get an extra room when there's a perfectly good floor just waiting for you in the one room you were going to get. We weren't sure if that was how it worked in the U.K., but we weren't gonna take any chances. But some-

times these things do take awhile and standing in the rain got old and my frustration over trying and failing to sightsee something other than those god damned rocks (Stonehenge) built to a fever pitch, so I snapped and said "Fuck all... I'll meet you guys at The Windmill later," and took off for Westminster Abbey to get all smart and shit.



Day 11: May 10th

Normally, this would be a boring little anecdote about how we went to the airport and flew home and so ends the story, but I'm a fucking moron. I got up early and got a wild hair up my ass and decided I was gonna head to the Tower Of London and play tourist before I met up with everyone at the airport. The only problem is that I didn't bother to double check as to what time the flight left and, for as much as I enjoyed visiting the Tower, it wasn't worth the exchange I had with the desk attendant at Gatwick International around 12:30 when she asked me where I would be heading to today.

"Tampa, Florida by way of Detroit," I said.

"Tampa, Florida?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Not today you're not," she responded.

"What?"

"That flight leaves at 1:15."

"I thought it didn't leave until 3:30!"

"No, 1:15."

"So, it's still here and I can still check in and make it!"

"No, I'm afraid you can't. We

6. Best known for releasing many Leatherface and Snuff records that I can't find anywhere.

7. At the show, Shawn pointed out that it was appropriate that we

would be playing with a band named for the family from the National Lampoon's movies based on all the shit that had been breaking on our trip.

require that you check in for international flights at least an hour ahead of time.”⁸

Day 12: May 11th

Take 2. I was paranoid as hell about missing my flight, so I left for the airport around 8:30 AM. After I checked in, I did some shopping and bought some postcards. Afterwards, I gave my Ma a call to let her know I was on my way home and to get some addresses for my postcards.

“Hey Ma.”

“Russell? Are you home yet?”

“No, I missed my flight yesterday, but I got it changed and I’m leaving in a couple hours. Should be home later tonight. I’ll call you when I get back to the States.”

A brief period of silence followed a sigh.

“Russell, I don’t know how to tell you this,” my Ma continued.

miracle that we didn’t miss any shows. Hell, we even wound up with an extra one! Looking over what I’ve written here, I suppose one might get the impression that this whole escapade was a disaster, but it wasn’t. I’ve read enough stories and talked to enough people to know we coulda had a lot worse of a go of it than we did. Sure, a lot of shit broke and went wrong, but it all went wrong in the best possible way. I mean, we never got stranded anywhere, nobody had a bad time and, most importantly, nobody got hurt. You only have to stop and think of The Exploding Hearts to put all that in perspective. That’s not to say it wasn’t hard at times. I was tired for a couple weeks afterwards and all the family business and grief surrounding the loss of my Grandma didn’t make my recovery any easier.

That’s also not to say it wasn’t the most financially devastating tour we’ve been on. In addition to losing hundreds of dollars, Buz ended up getting charges totaling over \$1,000 in import fees for all the shit we sent

..the likes of which could only serve to bolster one's faith in humanity.

“Tell me what? What’s goin’ on?”

“We lost your grandmother the Monday after you left town. She died peacefully, but we all talked about it and decided that it would be best if we didn’t tell you until you got home. We didn’t want to ruin your trip.”

“Oh,” was all I could muster.

“Are you okay? I’m very sorry.”

“I’ll be okay.”

After I got off the phone, I looked at the postcards I’d written. I looked at the one I’d written to my Grandma without the address on it and dropped it in the mailbox. I cried like a little girl all the way through security and half of the way back home. When I got back to Tampa, my young lady was there to meet me. I hugged her for a long time before I said anything.

Post Tour Epilogue Type Thing

So, barring a few mundane details, that’s how it all went down. I suppose it’s a small

over there. We assumed the charges because we couldn’t let Buz get screwed. Travis was able to cover it and we’re still paying him back, but that’s all just money. I can also say that I’ve never had more stolen from me in such a short period of time as I did in England⁹. Regardless of how bad or good we’ve always had it, I have a foolish, compulsive, and ungrateful tendency to complain and whine a lot when things don’t work out just so. But the fucking experience of the whole thing reminds me why I’d do it again in a second. Because when you stop and think about it, I suppose it all just comes down where you set your expectations (one could infer that are expectations must’ve been set pretty low!). So, true. We may be a bunch of unorganized, alcoholic, stubborn idiots, but it doesn’t change the fact that all of us good friends, spent almost two weeks in a place we’d never been to before, saw bands we would have otherwise never seen, had some amazing experiences, and met and hung out with some downright incredible people, the likes of which could only serve to bolster one’s faith in humanity.

Timeline

The Tim Version and Dukes Of Hillsborough UK Public Transportation Tour 2005

April 29th: Left Tampa, FL

April 30th: Landed at Gatwick Airport outside London. Took train to Brighton. Drank on beach. Slept on beach.

May 1st: Played a show with The Bad Fucks, The Ass Rockets, Spooky, and The Briefs. Met Captain Sensible—not only not very sensible, but probably not even a captain.

May 2nd: Tried to get a van. Failed. Hung around Brighton. Watched *Frankenhooker* with Nick.

May 3rd: Tried to get a van. Succeeded! Drove to Stonehenge and then to Bath. Got my hat stolen by a creeper.

May 4th: Drove to Liverpool. Played a show with Flamingo 50!

May 5th: Got our van broken into and had my camera stolen. Walked around Liverpool.

May 6th: Drove to Middlesborough. Played a show with The Dauntless Elite and The Mercury League. Van broke down. Greg and Dan from The Mercury League towed us to Sunderland.

May 7th: Said goodbye to the van. Greg from The Mercury League drove us to Leeds. Played a show with Blocko, Driveway Speeding, and The Swords.

May 8th: Got free cab ride to Derby. Played a show with The Atoms and The Dauntless Elite. Got drunk for Travis’s Birthday.

May 9th: Took train to London. Played a show in Brixton with Chixdiggitt, The Griswalds, The Dangerfields and The Random Heroes.

May 10th: Missed airplane because I’m an idiot. Played tourist the rest of the day.

May 11th: Successfully flew on airplane back to Tampa.



8. Turns out the plane sat on the tarmac for a couple hours before it left so I coulda got on, but the bitch behind the counter was still gonna be a bitch whether the plane sat there or not.

9. List of things stolen: my hat, my camera by the nicest thieves ever, and a soccer jersey I bought for my friend Jeff that disappeared from my bag while I was at the airport.

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Amy Adoyzie

Junk I'll Miss While in Chinky Chinky Chong Land

- Buddies, Pals and BFFs. Girl talk, dumb talk, and punching each other. Laughing so hard our guts want to explode. I love ya'll f'realz.
- Biking in Portland. To the Belmont library. To house shows or a corner booth at a bar. To cheap movies at the second-run theater.
- Beer. PBR and Sparks. With friends and strangers. With coozies and vomit. With dancing and passing out.
- Baking. Holy Shit! cookies, Can't-We-All-Just-Get-Along muffins, and Solidarity Squares.
- Butts. All of 'em.

Aphid Peewit

- 4130, *The Webster Sessions* CD
- Out With A Bang, *I'm Against It 12"*
- Murder Junkies finally coming to Minneapolis.
- Jake Byrd segments on the *Jimmy Kimmel Show*.
- "MySpace" shirts for sale at Hot Topic.

Ben Snakepit

1. Marked Men, *Fix My Brain* LP
2. Flamingo 50, *Tear it Up* CD
3. Bayonettes, 7"
4. Army Of Jesus, *Book Bomb 7"*
5. Drinkers Purgatory, CD

Buttertooth

1. Bauhaus, *In the Flat Field 12"*
2. Neurosis, *Souls at Zero* CD
3. Archers of Loaf, *Icky Mettle* CD
4. Dillinger 4, *Vs. God*
5. Brainiac, *Bonsai Superstar* CD

Chris Devlin

Top 5 T-shirts I Wore in the Last Two Months. (This was easy since I only wear five T-shirts. Thanks to Todd and Megan for pointing that out.)

1. Flipside, "Too stupid to quit, too high to care."
2. The Hot Snakes, "Audit in Progress."
3. Grabass Charlestons, "Summer 2005."
4. Dirtnap Records
5. Flipside, "Too stupid to quit, too high to care." (This one has a picture of Wattie on it.)

Daryl

- Abi Yoyos, *Mill Valley*
- Stovokor, live
- Coast to Coast with George Norry
- Sparks Plus
- Bent Outta Shape, "Backwash"

Denise Orton

1. New Mexican Disaster Squad, *Don't Believe* CD
2. The Ergs!, *Jersey's Best Prancers* CDEP
3. J. Page, *Goodbye Chapel Hill* CD
4. Pink Razors, *Scene Suicide* EP
5. Sir Prize Fighter, *Beat It to Live* CD

Designated Dale

Top 5 Krusty Merch Kreation's According to KISS

1. The KISS coffeehouse. As if it isn't bad enough seeing Starfuck's descend like locusts upon the earth, KISS thought it would be grand to open a themed coffeehouse down in Myrtle Beach, So. Carolina.
2. The Ace 'N' the Box. Ace Frehley plays "Shout It Out Loud" as he jumps out of his box.
3. KISS cycling shirts. I know what you're thinking: "Holy shit, those smanly looking spandex/lycra shirts that some bicycle enthusiasts wear?" Yes, and now they're made sporting KISS album covers.
4. KISS Army leather vest. It's going to cost you almost 400 American to show your gullibility, I mean, allegiance.
5. I wanted to use the 5th spot to wag the finger of shame at Gene for taxiderming the carcass formally known as KISS and taking it on tour.

Donofthedeat

- Tragedy, *Nerve Damage* LP
- Victims, *Divide and Conquer* CD
- AFI, *Decemberunderground* CD
- Destruction's End, *Prepare to Die!* LP
- Adolescents, *The Complete Demos 1980-1986* LP

Jennifer Whiteford

1. Bellrays at Beachland Bar in Cleveland
2. Pretty Girls Make Graves, *Elan Vital*
3. Pony Up!, *Make Love to the Judges With Your Eyes*
4. Patti Smith, *Easter*
5. Camp Radio, Self-titled

Jenny Moncayo

Top 5 Songs

1. Toys That Kill, "Bomb Sniffin' Dogs"
2. Riverboat Gamblers, "Don't Bury Me...I'm Still Not Dead"
3. Dirtbombs, "All My Friends"
4. Carrie Nations, "Girlfriend"
5. The 101ers, "Keys to Your Heart"

Jim Ruland

1. Pedro punks drinking all the booze at the Toys That Kill record release party.
2. Dave Guthrie pogoing to the new Riverboat Gamblers record at his own wedding.
3. The new Riverboat Gamblers record.
4. The psychobilly dude from Rigor Mortis who gave my truck's dead battery a jump at Union Station.
5. Rumors of a Blood Bath and Beyond tour on MySpace.

Jimmy Alvarado

- Bloodhag, *Hell Bent for Letters*: Righteous racket in reverence to the written word.
- Killing Joke, *Hosanna's from the Basements of Hell*: A well placed steel-toe to the eardrum.
- Final Conflict, *Ashes to Ashes*: Where Fenders Ballroom nostalgia meets lyrics that remain frustratingly topical two decades later.
- The Coup, *Pick a Bigger Weapon*: Heavy funk grooves laced with lyrical landmines.
- 6/6/06: Like getting a second Halloween this year, but without annoying midgets extorting candy.

"I can't laugh or be offended when the gold they're grabbin' turns to lead, and the more they get, the more they let it weigh them down." The Tim Version, "Stale Coffee"

Joe Evans

- The Ergs!, *Jersey's Best Prancers* CDEP
- Lemuria/Kind Of Like Spitting, *You're Living Room's All Over Me*
- Modern Machines, *Take It, Somebody!*
- None More Black, *This Is Satire*
- Armalite, Self-titled

Julia Smut

1. The 1967 Riley Elf MkII
2. The New Beach Alliance
3. The Shadows
4. The Cheifs
5. The South Bay Surfers

Kiyoshi

1. The Swallows have come home to make bird babies. So faithful.
2. My boy got choked out. Marcus Aurelio beat Takanori Gomi.
3. The Bronx residency at Spaceland. (free!!)
4. Ninja Academy residency at Silverlake Lounge. (Freeeee!!!)
5. *Linda Linda Linda*. Sweet Japanese movie about a girl group.

Lord Kveldulfr

- My Five Favorite Records That Rich Winker Taped for Me Back in High School*
1. The Wards, Self-titled 7"
 2. Government Issue, *You LP*
 3. Angry Samoans, *Back from Samoa LP*
 4. Various songs by the Bloodbats
 5. Toy Dolls, *Idle Gossip LP*

Maddy

1. Daniel Johnston, *Early Recordings, Vol. One* CD
2. Marked Men, *Fix My Brain* CD
3. Derrick Jensen, *A Language Older than Words* book
4. Burritos!
5. The Icarus Project
Minneapolis! Crazy punks unite!

Megan Pants

- Marked Men, *Fix My Brain*
- Fuckboyz, *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow* CD
- Toys That Kill, *Shanked!*
- Mind Controls, Self-titled
- Modern Machines, *Take It, Somebody!*

Mike Frame

- Young People With Faces, Self-Titled CD
- The Coup, *Pick a Bigger Weapon* CD
- Drive By Truckers, *Blessing and a Curse* CD
- Neckers, *Love and Infection* CD
- Public Enemy, *Rebirth of a Nation* CD

Miss Jenny AngeLILLO

1. The Flash Express and Andre Williams at Spaceland (5/6).
2. Smiths Night at Part Time Punks (5/21). Heterosexual guys with ironic haircuts trying to pick up girls by dancing like Morrissey. Better than any gay bar I have ever been to in my life.
3. "We're Gonna be Timeless," Mondays 8-10pm (Pacific Standard Time) on www.littleradio.com.
4. *Midlife Crisis at 30*, by Lia Macko and Kerry Rubin.
5. Me moving to San Francisco—Thank you Los Angeles. It's been real. It's been fun. But it hasn't been both...

Miss Namella

- Top 5 Shows to Come*
5. Don't Knock the Rock Film/Music Festival, June 29-July 3rd at the Redcat at the Disney Concert Hall in downtown L.A.
 4. August 3rd, of course the next GirlSSkool with the Clorox Girls (back in L.A. after two years!), The Atoms, and more at Little Pedro's.
 3. Savage Republic, The Chairs Of Perception (Urinals), and Amps For Christ at Safari Sam's, June 3rd.
 2. July 9th, Quintron and Miss Pussycat at The Echo/Part Time Punks.
 1. Joan Jett secret show. Enough said.

Mitch Clem

- Five Records I Listened to While Illustrating this Issue's Nardwuar Column*
1. Randy, Randy the Band
 2. The Queers, *Love Songs for the Retarded*
 3. Avail, *Dixie* (reissue)
 4. Nob Dylan and the Nobsoletes, *Positively 12 Stiff Dylans*
 5. Knockout Pills, Self-titled

MP Johnson

- Olga Tanon, the queen of merengue music
- *Rollergirls* (in competition with *Breaking Bonaduce*, *Dog: Bounty Hunter* and *I'm with Busey* for best reality TV series ever.)
- Osaka Popstar and the American Legends of Punk, Self-titled
- Ignite, *Our Darkest Days*
- *Masters of Horror: Cigarette Burns*, breathtaking and inarguably John Carpenter's best work since *In the Mouth of Madness*

Mr. Z

- Top 5 Most Loveable Punks I've Ever Actually Met*
1. Peeland-Z
 2. Fly
 3. Fleshes
 4. Killer Dreamer
 5. Dick and Jasper of Citizen Fish

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. Pointed Sticks, *Waiting for the Real Thing* CD
2. Various Artists, *Funhouse Comp Thing* CD
3. THOR, *Devastation of Musculation* CD
4. The Nips, *Tits of Soho* CD
5. Vancougar, *Losin' It* CD

Newtim

1. Marked Men, *Fix My Brain*
2. Modern Machines, *Take it, Somebody!*
3. Toys That Kill, *Shanked!*
4. Sexy, *Boma Ye!*
5. The Ergs, *Art of the Underground Singles Series #8 7"*

Norb

1. Marked Men, *Fix My Brain* LP
2. Little Killers, *A Real Good One* CD
3. Brimstone Howl, *M-60* EP
4. The Tough and Lovely, *Born of the Stars* LP
5. Buzzcocks, *Flat-Pack Philosophy* LP

Rhythm Chicken

1. CF-98, *Enjoy*
2. Call Me Lighting, *The Trouble We're in...*
3. Being back in America, land of *real* truck stops!
4. Being back in Wisconsin, land of *real* cheese and beer!
5. As dorky as this sounds...WI-FI.

Ryan Leach

1. Miss Alex White and the Red Orchestra
2. Black Time
3. The Fall at the Knitting Factory
4. Backside smith grinds (skateboard trick)
5. Lester Bangs

Speedway Randy

- Top 5 DVDs on Repeat*
1. *The Passenger*
 2. *Ratcatcher*
 3. The Gories on You Tube
 4. *G.I. Joe redux*
 5. Devo videos

Todd

- Marked Men, *Fix My Brain* LP and live. Twice.
- Measure {SA}, *Historical Fiction* LP
- Toys That Kill, *Shanked!* LP and live. Twice.
- Tranzmitors, *Some Girls b/w Dancing in the Front Row 7"*
- Tiltwheel, live

**Hey! Person putting
your reviewable in the
mail: full album art is
required for review.
Pre releases go into
the trash.**

**A DEATH IN THE FAMILY:
*This Microscopic War: CD***

Frankie Stubbs produced this record and you can tell. They have the signature Leatherface sound without straying too far into copycat land. These Australians don't carve out new territory but tread well on a sound that many have tried and failed. Samiam and Hot Water Music definitely get played in the van these guys drive around in. Although this recording has a big, polished sound, there is still the element of rawness in the guitar tones. Worth a listen if you like crunchy melodies but are tired of the suburban pseudo-angst that harmlessly swarm the music world today. —Buttertooth (Poison City)

AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY: *The Restoration of Chaos & Order: CD*

The songs have clever breakdowns and catchy choruses and the CD has fun cover art, but despite such positive aspects to this album I'm not liking it as much as I liked *All Fall Down* when that LP first came out. Another interesting point to make as well: kind of like how Hopeless Records' Falling Sickness began life as a band playing straight up ska and then evolved into something of the hardcore variety, their label-mates seem to be going through the same progression. Save for some horns here and there (just because songs have horns doesn't mean they're ska) this album is more akin to AAA's most recent offerings. Not sure if you read that as a good thing or a bad thing (because let's face it, third wave ska was horrid), so take that info as you will and go with your first instincts. Always. —Mr. Z (Hopeless)

AGGROLITES, THE: *Self-titled: CD*

Yeah! Authentic rude boy, Jamaican reggae sounds with soul from this band, based in Los Angeles. The recording has the sounds of an old reggae record from the '70s or a Motown record from the '60s. If I wouldn't have known better, I would have guessed that this was an old recording. The only give away is there are no pops and hisses. Boo! My review copy came with a generic Hellcat sleeve and a label stuck onto it to show what band and track listing it contained. Another thumbs down: a CD-R. Most reviewers around the world are music geeks. Why would we endure so much



*Lyrically, it feels like my dad
is yelling at me for getting a
bad report card.*
—Ben Snakepit

music? Not receiving a retail ready copy of a release sucks! There's nothing to look at or read while listening. Isn't that all part of the experience? —Donofthedeath (Hellcat)

**AGOROPHOBIC NOSEBLEED:
*PCP Torpedo/ANBRX: CD***

This is a double CD, disc one being a re-issue of the previously vinyl-only *PCP Torpedo* EP, and disc two is a bunch of remixes of what I guess are the songs on disc one. If you're familiar with Agorophobic Nosebleed, you can expect more of the same: really fast, computerized grindcore. One of these dudes is in Pig Destroyer, and his input is really the only part of this album that resembles anything that was even once hardcore or punk about this. The remixes sound like a Donkey Kong game being run over by a train at their best, and Aphex Twin or Atari Teenage Riot at their worst. The way the whole thing comes together kinda sounds like what watching *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* looks like. It gave me acid flashbacks and made everything smell and taste like gasoline for an hour or so. This album is cool if you're in the mood for a bunch of fucked-up noises. —Ben Snakepit (Hydra Head)

**AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER:
*Demo Tape***

Yes, yes, yes, yes, this is the shit! This is the kind sugar papa likes. The dudes that used to be in Athens, Georgia's No! have started a new band, American Cheeseburger, and boy is it fucking perfect. Fast-ass shit melodic-ish hardcore that reminds me of Spazz or Charles Bronson without all the blast beats,

with super pissed-off vocals but also with a sense of humor! Nothing makes me happier than a band that doesn't take themselves super-seriously all the time. I mean, there are some topical songs and issues addressed, but for the most part it's all just rad fun. Come on, how can you not love lyrics like: "Playing Super Ghouls and Ghosts/Eat tofu and Texas toast"? This shit is rad. If you run a record label, you should put out this band's record! —Ben Snakepit (Demo)

ANDRE WILLIAMS: *Aphrodisiac: CD*
Pravda Records is still around??? I thought they went out of business like fifteen years ago! I wonder if they still have any copies of that Defoliants EP that Soul Asylum ripped the "Hang Time" cover idea off of. Well, anyway, let the record show that Andre Williams—surely the only human being to have played both the Apollo Theatre and the Concert Café—has had a fifty year recording career; therefore, my opinion and/or potential endorsement does not and should not matter one pinch o' poo in the grand scheme of things. That said, whilst I liked Mr. Williams' output for Sympathy et al in the '90s fair enough, 2006 finds me finding his voice wholly unremarkable at this late date in his larynx's history, and, worse yet, finds me finding him backed by some anemic white boy soul/r&b/funk outfit to whom WAR (ca. "Spill The Wine") and Gladys Knight & The Pips appear to be some manner of holy grail. I didn't much care for this type of music when it was on AM radio when I was a kid in the early '70s, and, to tell ya God's honest

truth, I still can't stand the shit today. If this record still makes your white urbane ass feel like it's been given an honorary Harlem knighthood, go nuts. Me, I'm still trying to figure out whether or not anyone in his backing band was ever in Too Nice For Nancy. Whoopee ding. BEST SONG: "Uptown Hustle" BEST SONG TITLE: "I Don't Need Mary (Juana)" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: A few years ago, I played roulette at the same table as Andre Williams. He kept trying to take his chips with him, not realizing that roulette chips stay at the table under penalty of great censure. That's actually not the fantastic amazing part, though: Later that weekend, I was riding in an elevator with Mr. Williams, and he took a fancy to my shirt. It was a standard Superman t-shirt, except that, instead of being royal blue, as these things tend to be, it was powder blue. Andre Williams kept telling me that my shirt was "the bomb!", and attempted, several times, to literally purchase the shirt off my back. I wouldn't sell, and, from that point forward, my powder blue Superman t-shirt was known to me as my "Andre Williams shirt." Fast forward several years, and I am opening up this month's package of reviewables from *Razorcake*, which included this CD. What shirt, might you guess, was I wearing as I opened it? Correct. My Andre Williams powder blue Superman shirt. Doo-DOO-doo-doo-Doo-DOO-doo-doo... —Rev. Nørb (Pravda)

ANGRY ANGLES:

Apparent-Transparent: 7"

Oh man, this band keeps delivering: Jay Reatard and Alix from The Lids, if you haven't heard. Redefining new wave in good form: sometimes moody, sometimes fast sounds without pretentious goth or keyboards. They are all business without an inch of waste, from the poppy title track to the haunting "You Fell in" and a killer, cover of "The 15th" by Wire. All of their singles come highly recommended. —Speedway Randy (Plastic Idol)

ARMY OF JESUS: *Book Bomb: 7" EP*

This was recorded at the same time as the other 7" (*Prosperity Health Finance Wealth*) but this one sounds a million times better, (note to bands: go ahead and drop the extra hundred bucks on mastering your record. It's worth it!) much more in-your-face, meaner, and uglier than the last one. They're still pissed at cops and bosses and rich honkies, but they take it a step further by unleashing their hatred on monetary systems (but you still gotta pay for the record), the music industry (but they still got the records pressed at United), and Myspace. (How'd you book the tour, guys? On the phone? It's 2006.) While it's essentially the same band as their other two records, this par-



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ticular release comes across as too preachy and complain-y. I think Doug should start smoking weed again. —Ben Snakepit (Criminal IQ)

ARMY OF JESUS: *Prosperity Health Finance Wealth*: 7" EP

Kudos to these dudes for putting out their own record, even when other people offered to do it for them. This is a nice slab of pissed-off, mad at the world hardcore in the vein of DS13 and Tear It Up, without the bandana thrash gimmickry. These guys are unashamed of their opinions, and boy are there lots of them. They hate Christians, cops, lawyers, judges, and all other rich white bad guys, almost to a fault. At times it seems like they're trying to duplicate a classic hardcore feel that they might as well be a cover band. Still, it fuckin' shreds and the next time I'm mad at somebody I'm gonna put this on. —Ben Snakepit (BSD)

AWESOME SNAKES, THE: *Stupid Demo*: CD-R

I thought this was going to be a really bad demo: a CD-R with no artwork or song list. Wrapped around the case is a printout of a web page. Whoopee! So I read said literature and found out that this is Danny and Annie of The Soviettes side band. A real whoopee now! Now I am interested. They're a drum and bass combo that play low-fi garage punk that is poppy yet very psychedelic in a go-go kid way. Adding to this are songs about snakes

and things that are awesome, samples of some instructional record, and random noises while they play in the background on a few tracks. Vocal trade offs, as expected from these two, who share vocal duties in their other band. The last track throws everything out the window and basically sounds like a hip hop dub track. An actual release is planned—probably as this is going to print. I'm interested to hear what that might sound like. —Donofthedeath (The Awesome Snakes)

BAND OF HORSES: *Everything All the Time*: CD

Band Of Horses may not be entirely original and they may not be all together thrilling for most people, but any band that can showcase a wonderful mixture of soul-piercing vocals reminiscent of Brian Wilson meeting up with Wayne Coyne of The Flaming Lips has got something special going on. The music that backs these fine vocals is a mixture of verdant dream pop and mopey shoegazer guitar riffs. The band can seemingly go from sounding akin to slowcore band Codeine on one tune and the next moment coming across like Built To Spill or The Shins. It's a strong blend that works behind the piercing vocals and wistful lyrics of this Seattle duo, comprised of the core of the now defunct band, Carissa's Wierd. This is great summer music that knows how to properly tread the ground between

melancholic and triumphant and does a damn good job doing it. There are pleasant build-ups that are peaked and then find themselves falling back down, but never too far that they're tragic. The ten songs on this album show Band Of Horses to be a band that is quite capable of handling the dynamics in music that so many bands fail to understand: loud and soft, fast and slow, intense and laid back, etc. At a pace like this, good things can only abound for this duo. —Kurt Morris (Sub Pop)

BANNER PILOT: *Pass the Poison*: CD

Sounds like the Methadones, or maybe even Sludgeworth. *But with vomiting!!!* BEST SONG: The presence of "Ever Fallen In Love" kind of can't be negotiated around. BEST SONG TITLE: "Bender"—i mean, Bender was way cooler than Fry or Leila IMO. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I was just bitching last weekend about bands who put seven or so songs on a CD, my main point being that if bands want their fans to take them seriously (which, shockingly, many do), that kinda works both ways, requiring the bands to take the fans seriously as well, thusly precluding them from recording seven or so songs and attempting to pass it off as an "album" when everyone and their ma knows that an "album" is like twelve or fourteen songs (although it should likely be stated that experience has taught me that seven or so

songs is the perfect amount of songs to record at one sitting—any more than that becomes a hideous cattle call; any less than that is not cost effective). Amazingly, i found this seven-or-so-song CD to be almost perfect in length; it pretty much seemed like i got a full dose of the band, yet it was only seventeen-eighteen minutes long. Huh. —Rev. Nørð (Arsenic)

BAYONETTES: *Self-titled*: 7" EP

Maddy Tightpants would love this band. They play awesome girly, garage power pop not too unlike Nikki And The Corvettes, Loli And The Chones, or even The Winks. Straight-ahead rocking with dirty production and minimalist art (granted, this was the tour-only DIY cover I got). This would be right at home on Rip Off or Teenacide. It seems like Toronto is blowing up with good bands lately, and these kids are surfing right on the crest of the wave. Excellent stuff. —Ben Snakepit (Deranged)

BEAR PROOF SUIT: *Demo CD-R EP*

One way to get my attention for a review is to yell, "Hey L.A., did you get that CD yet?" when I walk into a party in a foreign city in the middle of a bender, which is how I met (although slightly disturbingly not for the first time) Ryan Poortenga, one of the singers and guitar players of Milwaukee's Bear Proof Suit. The surest way to hold



UNITED STATES - "DIVORCE SONGS"

Debut full length. Anthemic and jagged, "Divorce Songs" invokes justified comparisons to Fugazi, Curious, early Smell Youth, and Moss Icon. Features members of The Insurgent, The Assistant, Bent Outta Shape, Ringers and others. Out July 4th 2006



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that attention is to back it up with good music, which Bear Proof Suit definitely does. Hardcore punk that's tough without being meat-head, fast without losing precision, and tight without being sterile. Seven songs (two covers, but it is a demo). I'll be looking for their upcoming 7" and hoping they play a basement near me soon. —Megan (www.myspace.com/bearproofsuit)

BILL BONDSMEN: Self-titled: 7" EP

These guys continue to impress with seven more slabs of solid hardcore short on frills and long on attitude. When they really get a good groove going, like on "Down with the King," they come close to rivaling new label mates Out Cold's sheer power. Great stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Acme)

BLACK BEACH UNION:

Under the Sacred Palms: CD

After the blast and among the ruins in the rubble, there is no electricity, just shredded remains, radioactive seagulls, acoustic instruments, tattered voices, and songs of fights lost but spirits and traditions unbroken. That's what I get from Black Beach Union: gypsy folk music that's undeniably punk—gravelly, grave, simple—and I find myself lured to it. I want to sit down with 'em around the burning barrel and sing along while drinking from a jar. For Starvations' fans, too. —Todd (No Front Teeth)

BLACKTIME: *Midnight World: LP*

Midnight World contains a lot of music for being so minimal. Sometimes, I stare at the keyboard. There's only twenty-six letter keys on it, but I come up with new sentences all the time. With music, on a bass, there's four strings. A guitar, six. Two drum sticks. And even at its most primitive and basic, there are almost infinite combinations. It's all been done, but does that mean you deny young souls their time? When music's laid so bare—from Supercharger to the Reatards to the Gories to Leadbelly to the Mummies—to Blacktime, it's kind of astonishing; something so naked and raw and old yet new screams at you like a baby fighting a dinosaur in a lo-fi world. The blood and shit and screams are real. Proficiency in music is greatly overrated. Crawling back into the cave, it's times like this—when wars are digital and kids look at vinyl records with the same expression they'd use during a rectal exam—that bands such as Blacktime make more and more sense to me. Great to listen to in the dark, too. —Todd (In the Red)

BLOODHAG: *Hell Bent for Letters: CD*

You gotta love Bloodhag. Seriously, it's a law in some states. They're just so friggin' good that you really can't help yourself. Sure, they're essentially a burp-metal band, but four things make 'em rise above the pack: 1) their songs rarely break the

two-minute mark, which means no guitar wanking; 2) their songs are well constructed and, frankly, rock; 3) instead of dwelling in some faux sci-fi universe where metal is king, the chicks wear only loincloths (actually, that one has its merits, but I digress) and robots have feelings, they opt instead to literally sing biographies in homage of those who write about such worlds in ways that don't suck (this time around, Douglas Adams, Poe, Anne McCaffrey, Madeleine L'Engle, Franz Kafka, and Phillip Jose Farmer are among the scribes paid tribute); 4) books are cool, and they obviously love books. That last one alone—given that we now live in a world of iPods, laziness, and short attention spans—puts 'em in the running for "saints" status. Easily the best band that ever rocked a library, and y'all muhfuggahs betta recognize. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

BOMBSHELL ROCKS:

The Conclusion: CD

These Swedes have been blasting their brand of Rancid-y streetpunk stuff for many years now and I've always considered them to be amongst the best at it. I'm happy to report that some things don't change: lots of soaring guitars and "Hey, Hey, Hey" action. It's cool to see a lot of these types of bands finding a home on a label that seems to be suited to them perfectly. —Ty Stranglehold (Sailor's Grave)

BRAIN HANDLE: Self-titled: 7" EP

It's straight ahead meat and potatoes hardcore from Pennsylvania, the land of Electric Love Muffin and Flag of Democracy, and I like it. You know what you're getting ten notes into the first song. The menu's straight forward, you order it, and it's on your plate, glad it's nice and hot, not just reheated. It fills you up: not too greasy, not too dainty, not art-confusing. I'd put them in the modern company of Career Suicide, Direct Control, and the Pedestrians: very interested in resuscitating the early '80s while not willing to jump down in its grave to violate the corpse of old music. Solid stuff. —Todd (Fashionable Idiots)

BRIMSTONE HOWL: *M-60: 7" EP*

Rapid, floor tom heavy, squawky crap (meant in the nicest way, i can assure you). The singer sounds like he's yowling thru one of those boxy mikes that looks like some manner of 1950s automobile adornment, and the guitar player might be in line for this month's Gary Farrell synapse-fryification award. Although no one has explicitly asked me to testify in this matter, i may, in fact, do so unbidden. *So be it!* BEST SONG: "Soulless" BEST SONG TITLE: "Bad Kisser" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Each side of this record consists of a really short song followed by a much longer song. —Rev. Nørð (Boomchick)

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BRUTAL KNIGHTS:

The Pleasure Is All Thine: CD

Did you ever wonder what bands like Zeke or The Candy Snatchers would sound like if they weren't awful bar rock bands? Well, now you don't have to wonder anymore—you can just listen to this Brutal Knights record instead. Fast, loud, scummy rock with beautifully stupid lyrics, and not unintentionally stupid like Zeke—these are stupid *on purpose*! I guess the bottom line is whether or not you can stomach this kind of stuff at all. If you can, this record is completely awesome, but if you're still nauseous from years and years of bad Motörhead plagiarism, then the retarded lyrics might not be enough to make you like this. —Josh (Deranged)

BURNING BUSH:

As I Went out One Morning: 7"EP

Fans of the Bassholes, take note. It's rising-steam-from-a-boiling-pot, assuredly played roots rock. (Think of John Mellencamp without the self-righteousness and the millions, swapped out with hard luck and pot-holes, mixed in with the Gories and tenderness.) This is a side project featuring The Gibson Brothers' Don Howland and Reigning Sound drummer, Lance Wille. Enigmatically and exquisitely packaged with an insert in German (?) and a Rorschach design silk screened on a thick brown cardstock cover, there aren't many clues as to the who, what, where, and why on the release itself. The A-

side's a Bob Dylan song (you know, the guy who did the voiceover for Yoda and was recently in Victoria Secrets commercials) and one of the two B-side tunes is a nicely muted and rambling retake on a song, "Hell's Angel," from the Bassholes' self-titled album on Dead Canary. —Todd (Fistful of Records)

BUSY SIGNALS: *Can't Feel a Thing b/w All the Time: 7"*

Pure fucking electricity. Take the hot, crunchy directness of the River City Tanlines, the holy-shit-we're-gonna-die-happy-tonight winning-through-losing vibe of the Tyrades, and somehow serve that with a side ice-creamy goodness of Josie Cotton (Wha? I can't figure it out either, but damm, if it don't work, like cotton candy made with gunpowder.) My only complaint? Too short. Me want more. —Todd (Shit Sandwich)

CALZONES, LOS:

Frecuencia Extrema: CD

Music geeks love packaging. I love how well thought out the packaging is for this release: an almost origami fold out cover that packages inside the CD and its contents. Instead of the usual booklet for the lyrics, they have individual cutouts the size and shape of the CD for each song with an image on one side and the lyrics on the other. That is so cool! Self-proclaimed as ska, I hear so much more from this band from Argentina. I hear elements of salsa, Caribbean,

and other tropical tones mixed in with upbeat fun. With a little research, I found out that this band started back in 1989 and have continued playing even though the popularity of the genre has waned. Very successful in South America and most likely in the Latin community here, it is nice to see that the label has reached out to have this band's music reach out to an even wider audience by being reviewed here. Me, being Asian, and being a fan of music sung in Spanish, this just tickles me—even though I don't understand the language. Right off the bat, I can tell this band has been together for a long time. The musicianship is real tight and recorded with professionalism—professional in a major label sense. The production is big. The main vocalist is very soulful and it sounds like everyone in this six piece band participates in singing. The horn section is sharp and precise in their delivery. The bassist throws down some riffs that show he can most likely play with anybody. The guitars and drums tie everything together and make it whole. I really enjoy this. If I run across anything else by this band, I'm definitely purchasing. —Donofthedeath (Delanuca)

CARDINAL SIN, THE:

Hurry up and Wait: CD

It makes no difference how many "punk" bands end up with their own prime time specials and make quintuple platinum records, I'll still get


weird looks from people for wearing a Toys That Kill T-shirt, or have people tell me "The Ergs? No one knows who they are." That's sort of what I like about The Cardinal Sin; this is poppy enough that your average random person won't just write this off. However, there's also some indie/post punk overtones, and compared to most of those garbage bands that worry about "making it," this band actually focuses on coming up with good songs. Here I could probably play this in front of both my Mom (and she wouldn't HATE it) and my friends (who would probably enjoy it). I like this. —Joe Evans III (Grey Flight)

CHEAP THRILLS / NERVOUS HABITS: *Split: 7"*

Look, I'll freely admit it: I am one of those dickheads whose listening enjoyment is often influenced by how a record looks and sounds. And before you roll your eyes and say "Duh" to that little gem—what I mean is that there are people who are fans of lo-fi production, and there are those of us who deal with it. I'm one of the latter, and I found myself unfortunately having a hard time making it through this one. Which totally sucks, because I can hear the potential energy and hooks on both sides of this thing, like little jewels buried in the sonic slag heap. But when the entire thing is either buried so far in the red that the snare drum is, like, *indenting* the vocals (Cheap

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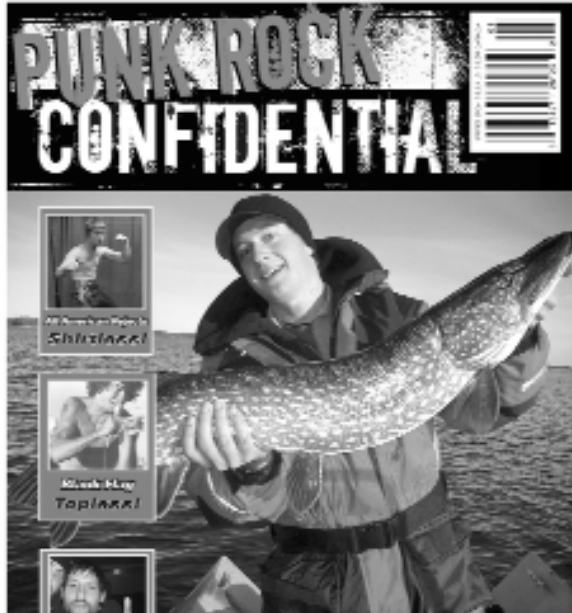
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Thrills) or is so treble-heavy that the bass is nearly nonexistent (Nervous Habits), it really gets frustrating—I could tell that, given a more interesting cover and just a bit more evening out of the production aspect of this record, the chances are really good that I'd have totally dug this one. But as it stands now, both of these bands are doing some pretty decent dagger-in-the-face punk shit, ala a more frenzied, simpler and meaner Briefs or bands of that ilk, but there's just too much fuzz covering everything. Everything's too tinny or too hot. I don't need sitars or quadruple-tracked guitar solos, but I want to be able to *hear* the shit, you know? —Keith Rosson (Terminal City)

CHURCH, THE:
***Uninvited, Like the Cloud:* CD**

I bet the singer wears black jeans, a button-up black shirt, sunglasses, and has a cigarette in hand at all times on stage. Which is kind of how I picture The Plimsouls. Which is also probably why I've never listened to The Plimsouls willingly. —Megan (Cooking Vinyl)

COCO COMA: 7"

Spastic garage punk, nestled somewhere between The Trashies and The Motards. Vocals are nicely fuzzed-out, works well. Super-creepy cover that looks like it was drawn by a possibly demented little kid. Liked the flip side best—a

swaggering, sneering, mid-tempo number called "Premonition." If you're into this kind of stuff, Coco Coma's walkin' around with some snot in their pocket. You could definitely do worse. —Keith Rosson (Shit Sandwich)

CODE OF HONOR: Complete Studio Recordings 1982-84: CD

Formed from the ashes of Frisco hardcore legends Sick Pleasure, the remaining members of that band recruited Society Dog's Jonathin Christ after Nicky Sticky bailed and shifted the lyrical subject matter from crude humor and nihilism to radical-left agitprop. The result was some great, unique hardcore on their first record, a split with Sick Pleasure. The band's music on that record alternated between anthemic punk and spazzed-out, wild-metered thrash, all with Christ calling for unity, dissolution of the government, and the killing of politicians. The band's second album, *Beware the Savage Jaw*, featured the band taking more musical risks and experimenting with their sound, although the proceedings remained just as angry and aggressive. Both albums, as well as their "What are Gonna Do?/What Price Would You Pay" single and an unreleased track, can be found here, and much of it stands up, considering the passage of at least twenty-two years since the last note here was put to tape. "Fight or Die"

remains an amazing piece of work, showcasing just how tight and creative the band could be even within the confines of hardcore's ultra-fast template. Highly recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Subterranean)

COUP, THE:
***Pick a Bigger Weapon:* CD**

In a period in rap's history when politics and the art of rhyme has been overshadowed by an almost obsessive emphasis on bitches, business, and bling, The Coup sticks out like Stokely Carmichael at a Pat Boone concert. Boots' rhymes cover every nook and cranny of how the system has failed the bulk of the country's great unwashed with eloquence and intelligence that is rare outside of hip hop's underground these days. Like similar-minded rhyimers like Dead Prez and Immortal Technique, Boots assumes a revolutionary stance, but infuses his politics with liberal doses of humor and a gift for telling a good story, which, when fused with Pam the Funkstress' funk-heavy beats, gives new meaning to "Revolutionary Party." Although there's no arguing that he means it when he says "'Death to the Pigs,' is my basic statement," he ain't about simply rehashing old slogans, and more often opts to make a point with a little more finesse: "Some confuse ass-breath with strong halitosis/it's been hundreds of years since its first diagnosis/by the African doctor Mwangi Misoi/ known in the States as 'Mr. Thomas' Boy'/he found that pre-

venting this affliction was lost/with the mention of the phrase 'Um, yassah boss'/When that phrase was uttered/many stomachs would wrench/some jumped in the Atlantic to escape the stench...." Like Abbie Hoffman and Jello Biafra (who makes a guest appearance here), the emphasis is more on the "prankster" approach to rabblousing and dropping lyrical bombs wrapped in wit rather than angrily railing about what is obvious to everyone but the Republican and Democratic parties and the corporate elite that control them. If you think rap sucks, you're just listening to the wrong joints, 'cause The Coup is some mandatory listening. —Jimmy Alvarado (Epitaph)

CRIMSON SPECTRE / UWHARRIA:
***Split:* CD**

Crimson Spectre: Reminded me a lot of the early period Corrosion Of Conformity. The weird melding of Southern rock with a twisted sense of reality added with the hardcore attack of a raging maniac with wailing vocals over a controlled, fast attack. It's fitting that this band comes from North Carolina. Uwharría: Another band from NC that seems to have gotten something from COC, but this band has members that have been in other bands like the Blownapart Bastards and Face Down In Shit. I read elsewhere that someone in this band had a stint in Oi Polloi. Self-described as "Eco-Thrash," the lyrics are centered



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around the environment. Musically, they sound like a mixture of Motörhead meets COC. I have a vague recollection that I might have reviewed something else by this band but I didn't keep it. Pretty cool split. —Donofthedeath (Magic Bullet)

CYRIL LORDS: *Motherland*: CD

A poppy, highly stylized Detroit (via Ohio) "garage" band, nearly evocative of the Smoking Popes. Polished, melodious, and infectious in that college radio way, this mop-top, Nehru-collared trio isn't nearly as communicable as their previous incarnation, The Bloody Hollies. However, the many loyal fans of the Cyril Lords will thoroughly enjoy this catchy and well-produced album. —Jessica T (No Fun)

DAN MELCHIOR: *Fire Breathing Clones on Cellular Phones*: CD

I first heard of Melchior as a collaborator with Billy Childish and Holly Golightly on various albums, and that is perfect company to keep. That term "singer-songwriter" has been destroyed by the mainstream to mean shitty white guy noodling in the House of Rules. That's too bad, because here is a man who puts on no image, just writes songs and rocks them out. These songs are heartfelt and melodic, and while you can see the link to the Childish-Golightly scene, this is not a rip-off but a solid voice. I can hear some good ole Country Teasers seeping in too. Shit,

I gotta catch up with his older stuff. —Speedway Randy (Plastic)

DBD: *Nobody's Heroes*: CD

They're really trying hard to make their mid-tempo punk stuff sound anthemic, and their songs aren't bad, but the whole thing rings just a smidge hollow. They're quite adept at what they do, but given the fact that they took their album title from a song by one of the most anthemic punk bands in history, I guess I just expected more. —Jimmy Alvarado (SOS)

DEATHCYCLE: *Self-titled*: CD

Heavy, preachy hardcore that sounds like Tragedy. It seems like they're especially mad at "punx" that don't think exactly the same way they do. Musically, it's pretty contrived. Lyrically, it feels like my dad is yelling at me for getting a bad report card. —Ben Snakepit (Chainsaw Safety)

DEFIANCE, OHIO:

The Great Depression: CD

I first saw Defiance, Ohio in a small space in L.A. as the last band after Toys That Kill, The Bananas, and This Bike Is A Pipebomb. It's no small feat to follow any of those bands (let alone the three of them together), but they held their own. The room was still filled with kids shouting, swinging on a rope from the ceiling, and dancing and sweating the little sweat they had left. The

Sissies mixed with the folk leanings of This Bike with violin, cello, and upright bass. Interesting recorded, fun as hell live. Good stuff indeed. —Megan (No Idea)

DICKS, THE: *Pigs Run Wild*

b/w Hate the Police: 7"

DICKS, THE: *Ten Inches*: 10"

The 7" says right on the sleeve, "Both out-takes from the original *Hate the Police* studio session." The 10" is a well-recorded, noisy live set from the Punk Rock Prom from Austin, TX, 1980, featuring one of my favorite songs of all time: "Kill from the Heart." If you don't own any Dicks on vinyl (or the retrospective *Alternative Tentacles* released several years back), it'll do you more than a bit of good to get square with The Dicks and snatch up this vinyl. Here's the Cliffs' Notes: The Dicks were part of the original embryonic nutrients of Texas hardcore, whose mutant DNA can still be heard in bands today. Way before codes, rules, and instructions made a narrow corridor, then a box, for much of hardcore, The Dicks pushed conventions, of both the old guard and the new spawn. They were a band made of thugs headed by a flamboyantly gay, very left, extroverted, meaty man with a great voice (much like the Big Boys' Biscuit or Minutemen's D.Boon). It's liberating, twenty-plus years later, to hear that such a wide musical conduit still sounds great.

They're unmistakably punk and on fire, but they're also well imbedded into soul, blues, and country without betraying the original fighting spirit of any of those genres. It's such a tall order for any band: make contemporary music that both understands and undermines their influences to create something original. And the Dicks have been one of the very few bands to not only pull it off, but to set it ablaze. What a treat. —Todd (Delta Pop Music)

DISCREET DOLL BAND, THE:

Deny Everything + 2: 7"

Man, not sure what they're going for here, as the only information on the cover is the band name and song titles and a highly pixilated photo of what looks like a young Richard Simmons smoking a cig. Sounds like mid-tempo snot rock with monotone vocals—they're shooting for some big riff-rock deal here, and they manage to pull it off for a little while; unfortunately, the songs also manage to go on about four times longer than they actually should. Imagine the Riverboat Gamblers if they all had two fingers on each hand, a heavy, heavy Quaalude addiction, and the insistence that a verse be played forty times. I know it takes a lot of work to put out a record, guys, but just because you can fit five and a half minutes of music on each side of a record, it doesn't mean you *have* to. Sometimes less is more, if not in

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love than at least in choruses, okay?
—Keith Rosson (Rich Bitch)

DRAG THE RIVER:
Has a Way with Women: 7"

Some of my San Diego friends have been singing the praises of Drag The River for years, but I'd yet to hear them. I was expecting alt country, but there really isn't any alt in there to muddy everything up, thankfully. From the first song, "This Star," I could see I'd sold my friends short. Simple, acoustic country with a voice clear and true. I can't describe it as anything less than beautiful. It's sad and romantic, but never touches cliché or sappiness. I have easily listened to that one song at least fifty times, and probably closer to a hundred, to be honest. The rest of the 7" follows strongly, but, to me, can't touch the magic that is captured in the first track. —Megan (Wallride)

DRAG THE RIVER:
Has a Way with Women: 7"

The first question that really comes to mind: *Why was this sent to Razorcake?* If anything, these dudes should be vying for a slot on *Prairie Home Companion* or something—resting somewhere in the neighborhood of a passive Rumbleseat and Springsteen's *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, this is some morose country and western stuff, acoustic style. It's not "alt-country" and is nothing like Lucero or bands of their ilk—this sounds like the kind of stuff that a

cowboy would get savagely drunk to before he accidentally shoots himself in the pecker while passing out with his gun. It's actually pretty decent in spots (though I could do without the slide geetar on the title track), but I really don't think they were tapping the right demographic when they sent this'n in to *Razorcake*. —Keith Rosson (Wallride)

DRAG THE RIVER: It's Crazy: CD
Similarly to the 7", I like the whole album, but there are songs that hit me much more strongly than others (like "Leavin' in the Morning" and "Mr. Crews"). The last track is the previous twelve tracks repeated. Fantastic soundtrack to pre-sleeping reading. —Megan (Suburban Home)

DRIVER: Ninth Valley: CD
Fast, thrashy stuff with funny song titles ("Lesbian Seahags from Indiana," "Midgets Can't Surf") and completely unintelligible vocals. —Jimmy Alvarado (Lookatme Bumpole)

DUCKY BOYS, THE:
The War Back Home: CD
It seemed that back in the late '90s when Dropkick Murphys and American streetpunk/oi (or whatever you care to call it) was hitting its stride, the Ducky Boys were everywhere. They were never stand-out amazing, but never a let down. Many years have gone by and I haven't heard a thing about these guys—until now that is. *The War*

Back Home kind of took me by surprise. I was expecting the old Ducky Boys. I guess the trace elements of some boot and braces action is there but it's overshadowed by big production and harmonies. I don't mean for that to sound like a bad thing because this is a damn fine record. If anything, they've finally defined themselves from the pack. I kind of liken this to how the Swingin' Utters changed up their sound, only without the Celtic influence. Lots of lyrics about the sad state the world is in these days. My only complaint is that the vocalist tries to over-sing a few notes and it comes off kind of cock-rocky at times. Well done other than that, though. —Ty Stranglehold (Sailor's Grave)

ERASURE: Union Street: CD
Erasure has released this eleven song album that is acoustic re-workings of some of their classic hits, and their biggest one, "Chains of Love," isn't included? Seems like a fucking tragedy if you ask me. —Kurt Morris (Mute)

ERGS, THE:
Jersey's Best Prancers: CDEP
CD version of the 12"EP that sold out practically the day it was released. No real subtle way to put this: one of the world's top twenty current bands puts out eight more songs and you should get it. For fans of: Bananas (pull back the skin and there's boulders in the bubblegum), Minutemen (tightly wound without

tiring the listener), Lifetime (artwork and the clarity of vision), Descendents (ain't afraid to be young, smart dorks at heart but still shred) and, you, know, great music that has a long shelf life. I've hit people's hands away when they've reached to eject the CD before it's finished. —Todd (Don Giovanni)

FASTIDIOS, LOS:
Rebels 'n' Revels: CD
Italian street punk/ska stuff that is better than most, and I like the "radical" slant of the lyrics, but, ultimately, this really doesn't do much for me. Funny, I seem to remember them being a wee bit more memorable. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mad Butcher)

FINAL CONFLICT: Ashes to Ashes: CD
I remember the first time I saw these guys at Fenders way back when I was still sporting a silly haircut and before this, their first album, came out. I had previously dismissed 'em as some lame peacenik Discharge rip-off, and so was completely baffled when Ron began verbally berating the audience from the get-go. BAM! Jimmy's an instant fan. Lyrically and musically, they were very much like contemporaries like Iconoclast and Body Count (no, not the Ice-T band, dweeb), with much emphasis on war, nuclear destruction, pigs, etc., but a more than passing metal influence in the guitar distanced them from the rest. Like a previous CD reissue, this includes tracks

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FRI. AUG. 11 @ Hatrixx, Kenosha, WI
SAT. AUG. 12 @ Hairy Marys, Des Moines, IA
SUN. AUG. 13 @ Sleeper Cellar, Kansas City, MO
MON. AUG. 14 & TUES. AUG. 15 FUCK OFF
WEDS. AUG. 16 Denver, CO
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FRI. AUG. 18 @ Grove Street Bolas, Bolas, ID
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from a preceding demo, but this version also includes a couple of cover songs from an even earlier demo. The verdict remains the same, however: if you like yer hardcore fast, tight, and political, you can't go wrong with these guys. —Jimmy Alvarado (SOS)

FIST FULL OF KNUCKLES:

Live on Tom Paine's Birthday: CD

I feel cheated out of the FFOK experience. I'm not a friend of theirs, so I don't know a thing about Karl's girlfriend Stacey or how she punched through John's window. Nor do I know the magic of what must be their dozens of basement shows and impromptu party sets. That being said, I'll say I can't fully and fairly critique this fairly well recorded live folk punk record. I don't know if that's what they call themselves, but I think that's the term most people would identify them with these days. Fist Full kids...I want you to put out a properly recorded record and tour out of North Dakota so I can fully appreciate the experience. And I'm sure it's an experience. —Steve (This Could Work)

FLAMING SIDEBURNS:

Back to the Grave: CD

Some pretty cool rock from this Finnish band. Sometimes it veers a little too far into "Scandinavian Rawk," but the moodier songs like "Black Moon" are great. It reminds

me of the New Christs and the Celibate Rifles in spots. Only real low point is the half-assed cover of "Funk #49": they totally strip the guts out of one of the greatest guitar riffs of all time. Bad boogie. Overall, a pretty solid disc for fans of Hives, Compulsive Gamblers, or The Maggots. —Mike Frame (Bad Afro)

FLAMINGO 50: **Tear It Up: CD**

I'm just gonna come out and say it. Louise Hanman from Flamingo 50 is my favorite singer in the whole world. Her adolescent-boyish shout and thick Liverpool accent spread smoothly over her band's noisy-guitar, Superchunky power pop to make this perfect little nugget, like Oliver Twist just after he eats a paper cone of French fries with mayonnaise. Seriously though, this album is awesome. It's a little more polished than their last full length; not sonically, but from a songwriting perspective. The record is awash in layered guitars, Beach Boys-inspired backing vocals, and an incredible warmth that only some magic mixing board wizard knows how to attain. This CD is in ultra-heavy rotation in my player. I sure hope they fucking tour the states. —Ben Snakepit (Spank, www.spankrecords.com)

FOR THE WORSE: **Couldn't Give Two Shits about the Kids: LP**

Pretty brutal East coast hardcore fronted by Mr. Mike McCarthy (A Poor Excuse). Mike's a bit of a leg-

end in New England. There's a picture of him on jumping off a balcony into a pit, he's trained as a wrestler, and he tends to leave his shows bleeding. He's one hell of a front man, so I was happy to see him doing something again. Some days, I really miss this kind of stuff—fast, short, angry, and frenzied as all hell. And throwing a Symarip sample and a Bruisers cover on there never hurts either. —Megan (Even Worse/ Kangaroo)

FORMALDYHYDE JUNKIES:

Self-titled: 7"

These guys are probably sick of hearing '80s hardcore band comparisons (so I'll spare naming names), but it's definitely there. It's mostly in the energy itself more than the sound. So damn energetic, so damn good. I was lucky enough (thanks to my friend Justin waking me up and driving for five hours) to see them play with the Fuck Yeahs in the basement of the Alamo House in Minneapolis over my spring break, and they were nothing shy of amazing. —Megan (Fashionable Idiots)

FOUR EASY PIECES:

Birth of the Uncool: CD

Two things: 1) their press stuff says they are influenced by Johnny Thunders, The Kinks, and all the other usual suspects, but their output is more ass-kick than rehash; 2) I think the album title, while obviously a piss-take on Miles Davis'

Birth of the Cool, is a bit of a misnomer, as the shit their peddlin' is plenty cool. High-octane punk rock that doesn't sound like yet another Thunders tribute band is what you get here, and they can easily rock with the best of 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (Last Shot)

FOURTH ROTOR: **Plain: LP**

I just don't get it—when the hell did Matt Freeman start singing for a Steve Albini band? Seriously, this sounds eerily like Freeman fronting some bouncy, bass-throbbing Shellac cover band or something. Am I off on this one? Does anyone else hear this? The rhythm section really owns these songs, while the guitar mostly plays catch-up or offers little high-end alterations. It's not as particularly heavy as Shellac, but that's about the only band that comes to mind when I think of stuff like this. Needless to say, it pretty much went in one ear and out the other; the emphasis seems to be placed on discordance rather than catchiness, and unless you're some kind of wunderkind virtuoso (i.e. really good at that shit), it's a genre that rarely moves me. I'm all for toeing the line and trying to present something new, until a band reaches the point where each song just sounds like five or six different, totally random sections strung together. —Keith Rosson (Southkore)

FRANTIC: *Attaque of the Grizzlie*: LP

First several times I played this, it zipped right by, seeming a little blunt and nubbed-down. But I didn't mind listening to it, and kept at it. To me, it had that weird honor of being a band I like listening to, but always had difficulty placing if I didn't put the record on. On the outskirts, Frantic's guitars sound like the Tyrades (imagine a cat strangled with wire) and has more than a passing blush to DC hardcore (with the cover of Government Issue and more barking and talking than singing). Then I discovered something on the tenth spin. You know all those records that say "Play loud!" just to look more exciting? Well, Frantic's true power is discovered at higher volumes, and that revealed something I hadn't picked up on at first: they seem to be channeling those recently released Adolescents demos. What it lacks in fidelity it gains in punching you in the ear while making you want to sing along to it. Post-it note attached to the front says it features members of Beat Beat Beat and The Carbonas. —Todd (Die Slaughterhouse / Douche Master)

FRIDAY KNIGHT / PANTY SHANTY: Split: 7" EP

Sometimes, when I'm writing reviews, I hope bands realize that I see their potential and raw talent, and these reviews are my two cents of encouragement while neither just

being a cheerleader nor a dick. Both of these bands have gumption and fire to spare. The recordings are a little shaky, but I hear good hearts making honest music, and that goes a long way. Friday Knight: From Chattanooga, they sound less like a band-in-forming, and more like seasoned musicians getting used to one another, taking cues from the Carrie Nations and Allergic To Bullshit (oscillating female/male vocals, and very spacious and dynamic musically. I wouldn't be surprised if it's Ivy singing). Panty Shanty: The recording and the songs themselves just sound a little too muddy—with the occasional sparkle. Like unsuccessfully panning for gold in dirty water, the songs themselves are repetitive. I have the feeling that once they find a shiny nugget or two of a song, they, themselves will begin to shine. —Todd (Plan-It-X South)

FUCKBOYZ: *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?*: The Fuckboyz Story: CD

This is a collection of all of the Fuckboyz releases, along with a bunch of previously unreleased tracks. It covers a pretty wide range of styles, which might be hard for some people at first, but stick with it because it's the range that makes it impressive and keeps it fresh after repeated listens. If you don't find yourself singing along to "Rock'n'roll Problem," there's seriously something wrong with you. Oh, and for the record, Fuckboyz is the

band that went on to become Hickey. Do you like Hickey? Then you need this. If you don't like Hickey, you're probably stupid and don't like jokes. —Megan (Fast Crowd)

GHETTO WAYS: *Party Down*: 7" EP

James Brown would approve. Great bands in this genre are like unexpectedly stepping into folks gloriously having sex out in the open, but not in a creepy, ashamed, or pathetic way. It's visceral: a celebration of lascivious noises and gasps for breath and moans that aren't usually heard in general public. Like the BellRays and the Jewws, the Ghetto Ways don't sound like a cheap porno put-on of "clap yer hands!" "boogie!" or "testify!" but of that undeniable full-body sweat music that's wrung out of a dirty T-shirt at the end of a set and splattered onto the floor, of shattered glass and steel-bending guitars, of rolling train drums and bass, all accelerated by a lady vocalist who sounds like a gospel singer belting out songs of the damned. Like the finest of liquor, comes in a brown bag (but stenciled). —Todd (Wicked Singles)

GOLDBLADE:***Punk Rockers in the Dance Hall*: CD**

Goldblade play street punk with a rockin' undercurrent. Pretty solid and fairly well written songs. One song appears to be about Ghostface Killah from the Wu Tang Clan. Overall, their sound falls some-

where between the Toy Dolls and Wat Tyler. —Mike Frame (SOS)

GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY:**Self-titled: CD**

All too often I'm trying to explain to knuckleheads that new hardcore doesn't have to sound like shitty metal. Now I have the proof. Angry, but not screaming vocals. Searing, but not overbearing guitar. Add a fast and throbbing rhythm section and you have an equation for hardcore success. GNP should be required listening. —Ty Stranglehold (Lorelei)

GRABASS CHARLESTONS:***When the Funk Hits the Fan*: 7"**

I don't think it will come as a surprise to anyone that Grabass is pretty heavily ingrained in the rotation at Razorcake HQ. Number One, they're some of the Best Dudes Ever. Number Two, they write songs that acknowledge the shit and the drudgery of life, but somehow manage to leave me feeling damn glad to be alive. And finally, they put out great music, but it's a music that's pretty hard to categorize. They play really, really well and you can tell that a lot of thought goes into their (dare I say it?) musicianship. Is it too slow too be punk? Too raw to be rock? You can go ahead and waste your time classifying them if you want—I'll be busy dancing. —Megan (Barracuda Sound)


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GRACER: *Voices Travel*: CD

There's a guy I work with who is just dumbfounded by the fact that I don't like 311 or half a dozen other bands he loves. "They're such talented musicians." To which my response is: "I don't give a good goddamn how talented they are. They're not playing anything I want to hear." Chuck Berry plays three chords and I'd happily listen to those three chords for three hours than hear some asshole noodling around being "talented" for three minutes. Gracer are talented musicians. It's just three guys and I'm sure if you see them live there's a minefield of awesome pedals and fancy lights all over their amps. But they aren't playing anything I want to hear. At nearly five minutes a track I should be able to grab on to something here. The kindest thing you could say is that it's "epic" indie rock. It drags on and on, pulling you through what sounds like out-takes from The Postal Service and/or Death Cab For Cutie catalog, and a lot of deep, emotional, poetic, schmaltzy lyrics that never hit their mark. If I could remember a single one of these songs I'm sure I wouldn't be shocked when I heard it in the background of a particularly emotional scene on *One Tree Hill* or *The Gilmore Girls*. Revelation Records... I like you a lot. We've had a lot of good times but I'm watching you guys. The path tread by Victory Records and this sort of crap is paved with thousands of shifted units but it's a dark one. -Steve (Revelation)

HARAM: *Self-titled*: CD

Oh shit, this is cool! A really nice surprise. Judging from the fact that this is on Lovitt and some of the dudes used to be in Page 99, I can only assume that this band is from NOVA (that's Northern Virginia to you non East-coasters) and they definitely carry the Fugazi banner with pride. I hear some Drive Like Jehu in here too, but it's total early '90s Dischord territory. These guys are talented musicians who work together well. The music is well written and multi-dimensional, and I'm definitely gonna listen to this a lot. Oh, and I read on the promo sheet that Jeff Kane is in this band now! Hi Jeff! -Ben Snakepit (Lovitt)

HEADACHE CITY: *Self-titled*: CD

I had expectations, but I wasn't quite ready for how slithery and juicy Headache City is. It's like their songs have Vaseline'd up Slip-n-Slides in the middle of 'em: vloop, songs just quirt by. It's just so "jazzy," too. Not jazz-ish, but so palatable and unique. It's a double head scratcher that when the songs are taken out of the context and sequence from the album: they're nicely weird universes into themselves. It's like a puzzle where every piece is its own mini picture, but when they're all interlocked, there's something definitely larger to hear that's presented by the length of the album. I'm fully aware that I'm stretching here, but it's like The Fuses meet early Bauhaus meet

Manikin meet Lost Sounds. I was fully expecting driving oddrock—which they deliver. I wasn't expecting the atmosphere and flourishes. This rubbed me completely the right way... and I didn't know I needed the rubbing. -Todd (Shit Sandwich)

HERESY: *Face up to It!*: CD

Here is one record that has eluded me for years. I passed on it a few times during its initial release. I vowed to come back and purchase it at a later time. But that time never came and I never saw another copy again. Ten plus years later, I have bid on a number of copies on the evil eBay and have been outbid by collectors who have money to burn. Last year, the reissue label Speedstate out of Japan released the second part of the Heresy trilogy and quickly sold out. A re-press was announced but never seemed to see daylight again. But the great folks at Boss Tuneage have come to my rescue! As soon as I heard that BT was releasing it, I sent an email into Razorcake HQ to see if I could have dibs if a copy came in since the label consistently sent in review material. Luck would have it that a copy had come in and was already assigned to me for review. Yes! Why do I care? Well, I was a partial fan. I bought a copy of the *Never Healed* flexi and the split LP with Concrete Sox. I enjoyed their track on Earache's *Grindcrusher* comp. But my favorite was *Face Up to It* that was on the

Manic Ears, *The North Atlantic Noise Attack* comp double LP. I wanted to hear more from that recording session. Now I get to. As I suspected, the songs are pure blasts of thrash with hints of crossover due to it being of the late '80s time period. Having a major role in the formation of such genres as grindcore and power violence, they were one of the speed kings. I have heard stories of Napalm Death and Heresy in their early days having battles at shows to see who can drum the fastest. In this recording session that has been remastered, you can hear that they were influenced by American bands like Siege and DRI. Their change in sound was less Discharge and more like the latter mentioned bands. Like Holland's BGK, they sounded very American. But that was not a bad thing. Hearing these songs for the first time, with the exception of the title track, with the manic and rapid speed drumming and the aural blur of the guitars, gets me charged up. I can't wait for Volume 3 of this discography series. Reading the liner notes, those recordings are the ones they are the most pleased with. If I like this, I know that one is going to make me into one happy music nerd. -Donofthedeath (Boss Tuneage)

HIDDEN CHARMS:***The Square Root of Love*: LP**

Take Dean Dirg (let's hit stuff and scream), The Hives (cocky swagger,

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but, Jesus, they can rule), add a lead singer that hasn't quite figured out his meds, mix 'em up, give 'em silly haircuts, get 'em stinko drunk, have them dry hump barely bar-legal lasses, touch a keyboard on occasion, pull out switchblades, trip, and fall over them while doing a stupid trick that costs an eye, and that's what it sounds like. Pretty much. Fight your friends. Puke where you sleep. Roll over so you don't choke to death. Teeth are overrated. Snort the pavement if the drugs fall. You know: healthy depravity because the prospect of getting old really sucks. I think they have a song that goes, "She's a wombat," too. (I love wombats.) The record comes with a stenciled paper bag so you can be an anonymous accomplice during their live show. It's retarded fun that could have easily come out of Portland, but hails from Germany. —Todd (Alien Snatch)

HOLY SHIT: Jazz Phase: 7" EP

Real solid, smartly aggressive, fuck-with-you hardcore that's channeling the spirit of Flipper and Saccharine Trust (make your audience pay—and not monetarily—for showing up), laid down and stretched apart on the rack of the Minutemen (they're intricate and driving when they choose), which puts them in contemporary league with the AbiYoyos and 400 Blows. Intentionally disjointed but held together by fuzz, herky jerkiness,

and screaming that sounds like the vocalists are coughing up sweater-sized balls of fur. Not every day listening, but well pulled off. —Todd (Trigger-on-the-dutendoo)

HOOKS & THE DAGGERS:

This Is Ballroom Thrash: CD

This album showcases what is good with music, punk, and sarcasm. This album has some of the best song titles, lyrics, and wittiness around. The album starts out with "Fuck You Punk This Is Ballroom Thrash," which blatantly proclaims their hate for publicists, the music industry, and generic fashion. Other cleverness that I applaud is "It's 9:11, Do You Know Where Your Rights Are?", "Self-Proclaimed Anarchists Are Usually Just Douche Bags," (and I can't help but love when people are referred to as douche bags) "The Rain on My Car Is a Baptism," "Sterilized (I Think You Should Be)"—which has amazing schizophrenic yet harmonized vocals on the chorus—and "Botox Disaster (Another Dead Yuppie)." And the lyrics are just as good as the song titles. The music reminds me of a severely sped up Soviettes with a dude singing, but hitting some charming high notes. —Jenny Moncayo (Moodkiller)

HOSTAGE SITUATION:

Self-titled: 7" EP

Super speedy straight edge stuff, thankfully short on the metal influ-

ence that plagues so many bands in this genre. The lyrics veer more towards the "personal politics" side of things, but there are a few that deal with the stereotypical "edge" subject matter. Not bad for what it is. —Jimmy Alvarado (Third Party)

HOSTILE COMBOVER:

Storklord: CD-R

This San Diego three-piece band is a bombastic blend. Imagine early Amphetamine Reptile bands, like the Cows meets Fugazi or Nation of Ulysses on a bus that Drive Like Jehu is steering off a cliff: intense with the loudness the early underground '90s perfected. For reference, a hostile combover is what you get when you mess with indigenous people's land, i.e. the Native Americans. "Ain't no joke, brother," as these guys say. This seven song gem was recorded by Gar Wood of Rocket From The Crypt. Definitely worth seeking out. —Buttertooth (Self-released)

I AM LOVED: Self-titled: 12"

From what I understand, I Am Loved is a band that plays spastic, harsh music in between bands at shows. Their music—drums and guitar—is purely improv and features a singer who, while not singing any actual words, can make a wide variety of noises with his voice. I feel the insert sums it up best when it states, "Guess you'd have to be there." I guess I would have. —Daryl (Trigger-on-the-dutendoo)

I OBJECT: Teaching Revenge: CD

Female-fronted '80s-style hardcore, heavy on the messages. I'm guessing they're coming from a vegan, straight-edge, anti-establishment stance, which is all well and good. I just have never been into being preached to. I'm from the camp that if you're using your songs to get a message across, that's fine. If you have to write an explanation as long as the song to explain that message (or if live you give an introduction the length of the song), then you're really not using that song as a tool for the message. If you want to stand on a soapbox and preach, go ahead, I'll walk by. If you put it in a song and let it stand on its own merits as such, I'll probably listen. —Megan (Alternative Tentacles)

I WALK THE LINE:

Desolation Street: LP

This is what happens when you judge a record by its cover—you look at it and prepare yourself for some Poison The Well or Thursday clone, which really isn't that great of a thing, but also isn't, like, anything to lay on a knife over. Then you *play* the record and realize you've been woefully, tragically misled—you're now subjected to a full-length LP that's drearily mired in a kind of Interpol-meets-the-Cure-in-a-country-bar half-lit kinda world, where everyone exclusively smokes cloves and vampires *may actually exist*. The title of the record's pretty fit-

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ting; there's definitely a sense of barrenness that permeates this album, but that doesn't really excuse the fact that it's also, well, terribly wimpy leaf-tumbling rock music. —Keith Rosson (Combat Rock)

INVISIBLE SURFERS / LOS KAHUNAS:

Waves of Reverb, Sea of Fuzz: CD
An instrumental surf split CD featuring Greece's Invisible Surfers and Argentina's Los Kahunas. Los Kahunas take their textbook cues from the Ventures, while the Invisible Surfers are a bit more maverick, like Dick Dale or the Trashmen. Good find overall. —Jessica T (No Fun)

ITCH, THE:

The Courage to Be Hated: CD
Really cool picture on the cover. Really terrible music inside. Well, that's not fair; it's the vocals. I mean seriously, The Itch, have you not listened to him? He's pretty awful. And the music's decent without it (there's actually an instrumental intro that's decent). I'd say unless you're practicing at his house, using his van, and borrowing his equipment, get yourselves a new singer. —Megan (Wee Rock)

JACK OBLIVIAN: Black Boots: 7"

The Memphis legend with Jeff Meier on bass and Mark Sultan on drums—two songs that show the soul beneath the rock continues. If you played this for me and said it was some cool old

45 you found from a geezer's collection of lost, smooth, catchy rock that he used to pick up girls with, I would believe you and give you money for it. —Speedway Randy (Shattered)

JAY REATARD:

Hammer I Miss You: 7"

A love song to hammers that is straight-forward cool (title track), a Reatards style rocker on the mild side ("It's So Useless"), and a real tight rocker ("All Wasted"). Less trash than Reatards, more straight rock than Lost Sounds, nobody disappointed. —Speedway Randy (Goner)

KILL YOUR IDOLS / MODERN LIFE IS WAR: Live on WLUV: Split 7" EP

Kill Your Idols: I'd never given this band a chance before because whenever I see people wearing their shirts they always look like jocks and date rapists, but damn if this isn't some solid pissed-off, melodic hardcore. Maybe I should stop judging bands by the way their fans dress, as I am definitely gonna check out some more Kill Your Idols stuff when I get a chance. Modern Life Is War: it's weird because both sides of this record were recorded at the same show on the same radio station, but the MLIW recording sounds like shit. One ho-hum tough guy original and a crappy cover of "Nervous Breakdown." Yawn. ATTENTION ALL BANDS! We've heard Black Flag before, you can't do a cover of theirs that's better than the original, so don't try. —Ben Snakepit (Lifeline)

KILLING JOKE: Hosanna's from the Basements of Hell: CD

Nearly thirty years down the line, Killing Joke continues to kick ass and take names. On their latest, the band sticks to the basic formula that made them famous: a monstrous, grinding stew of punk, metal, industrial dance; heavy as fuck yet wholly danceable if one is so inclined. Although their diversions into other territories over the years have been interesting at worst, it is this aspect of Killing Joke—that booming behemoth that lulls melodies at you while threatening to devour you whole—that has always left one with a sense of awe and a realization that music can be a powerful thing, indeed. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cooking Vinyl)

KITTY AND THE MANGES:

Joey's Song: 7"

As the name implies, it's a 7" from The Manges from Italy, with Kitty Kowalski singing. Three pop punk songs, including one song each from the band and Kitty, plus a Cyndi Lauper cover. If you're into pop punk, there's no reason you wouldn't like this, especially considering the effort It's Alive puts into its records (this record alone came on colored vinyl, and included a free poster). Awesome. —Joe Evans III (It's Alive)

KNIGHTS OF THE NEW CRUSADE:

A Challenge to the Cowards of Christendom: CD

By now most of the underground knows this band is a piss-take on so-

called Christian rock, and it is indeed a funny one. From the Chick Comics-inspired cover to songs like "Father Bingo," "E' Is Still Evil," and "What Part of 'Thou Shall Not Kill' Don't You Understand?" to the little Jesus fish included for the car bumper, these guys have their bases covered. Musically, it's Bay Area garage rock, which means it's loud and trashy. Can't wait to see if they manage to get themselves a live spot on KTBN. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

L.I.D.: Still Hasn't Gotten Weird Enough for Me: CD

Lower Island Dealers have been a Victoria mainstay going on thirteen years now. You'd think they'd have put out more than three records in that time, but hey, good things come to those who wait. It's a solid collection of punk rock that's reminiscent of something between *Fear of a Punk Planet*-era Vandal and *Musical Monkey*-era Guttermouth: songs that simultaneously come off witty and somewhat retarded. Songs about beer, weed, and food never sounded so good. —Ty Stranglehold (Foam Cell)

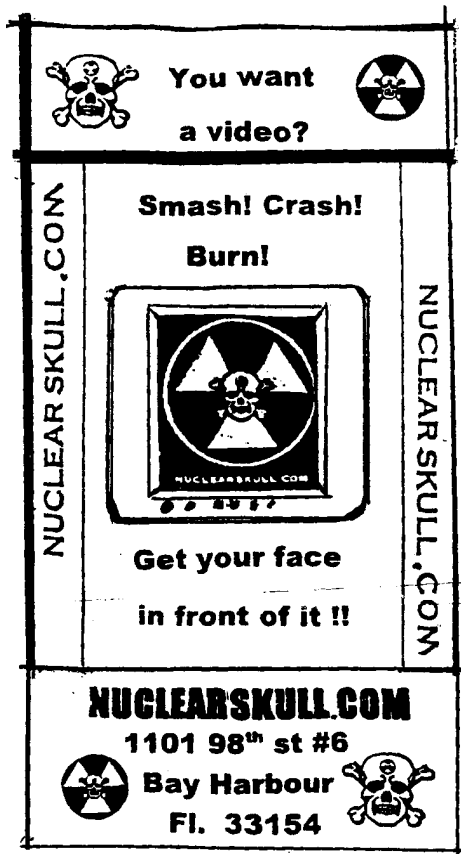
LAUGHIN' DOGS:

The Death They'll Give You: CDEP

Just when you thought you'd heard the last from any of Austin hardcore's old guard, this bad boy rears its ugly head. The little note they included says the band features former mem-



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bers of The Offenders and Poison 13, and there is a definite nod to the former sound-wise, in that this is straightforward, rough'n'tumble hardcore with political lyrics. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ding Dong Ditch)

LILLINGTONS, THE: Death by Television: CD

A remastered re-release of the Panic Button original. The Lillingtons were one of the few bands that Fat Mike openly laments he muffed up on not signing to Fat. It's ball-bearing tight pop punk that works like some sort of flu-like, invisible infection of catchiness, and has some of the best spooky lyrics this side of the Misfits (chopping up humanoids, putting them in a sack, and running them over with a van, x-ray specs, phantom maggots {the titles are usually the chorus to the songs}). I loved this record when it first came out and am happy to report that it's aged well. —Todd (Red Scare)

LITTLE KILLERS: A Real Good One: CD

I don't recall you asking, but, had you, in fact, asked, i would have gladly informed you that the Little Killers' debut LP has been my favorite album released in the past three or four years, easily. I mean, you got these taut Telecaster wig-outs pulling the left half of your brain left, this crazy militaristic bass going DENG-DENG-DENG-

DENG-DENG at skull-crushing volume pulling the right half of your brain right, and these kinky-haired, leather-lunged vocals cracking your cranium right down the center; it is difficult to listen to the album without experiencing some delightfully incapacitating manner of potentially lethal head trauma. Needless to say, the release of the follow-up album was an event fraught with high levels of both anticipation and anxiety. My first impression, after spending about ten minutes trying to get the EQ right in my car (and nearly running multiple organisms off the road) was *What the FUCK is Dean DOING???* I mean, after doing such a whiz-bang job producing the first album, one would think that Dean Rispler® would know that, on any given Little Killers recording, the drums are the third dog in a three-dog race. Fourth dog in a four-dog race if you count the vocals. Fifth dog in a five-dog race if you count the lyrics. And *here*, wayward Dean has somehow lost his mind, and mixed the drums all front and center, like he's mixing a Dirtbombs album or something! Quick scrutiny of the liner notes indicated the problem: The record was *not* produced by Dean Rispler®, but by superstar producer (and Dirtbombs drummer, ahem) Jim Diamond! Now, Jim Diamond is a cool dude, and a great producer in his own right, and i'm sure Jim Diamond producing the Little Killers sounded great in theo-

ry and looked superb on paper, but the harsh reality of the matter is that THIS RECORD SOUNDS WRONG, WRONG, WRONG (note clever Fastbacks reference)! I mean, i have to really strain to pick the guitar and bass out of the echoey sonic muck here; both those instruments should be battering my external occipital protuberances like crack-addded cherry-tree-chopping hatchets in the night! I mean, fuckin' A, the BASS keeps the time in this band, not the drums. That's important because the guitar and the vocals often get accentuated by being a little bit behind the beat, and the drums more or less ape the guitar/vocals. Therefore, if you want the Little Killers to sound like the Dirtbombs (in an abstract sense), you gotta beef up the BASS, not the drums. So, anyway, yeah, this record fails to effectively attack me in the manner to which i have been accustomed. And while, heck yeah, there are a number of decent blasts herein, their presence is somewhat offset by a ghastly amount of slow songs, which seem to get almost unbelievably slower as they plod along. I mean, "Been So Long" starts slow, and gets markedly slower at multiple instances in the song, to the point where i find it hard to believe that anyone could have left the studio in good conscience thinking the song was anything other than godawful, which it is, blatantly. I mean, when "Annie Can You Keep a Secret"—

from the "Let's Have Some Goddamn Fun" compilation—rolls around, it doesn't sound like that song you already know (and are sick of) off the compilation, it sounds like THE MOST BRILLIANT THING EVER. I dunno, man. I'm still a big fan and all, but, two albums in, i have yet to be shown conclusive proof that this band is anything other than a one-album affair. "A Kind of Okay One" is a more fitting album title. Better yet, "An Okay One (While Dean's Away)." Snicker. BEST SONG: "Annie Can You Keep a Secret" BEST SONG TITLE: "Annie Can You Keep a Secret" —whoops! I guess that song's just called "Annie" now. Okay, "Finger Pie" then. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I know both Dean and Jim. —Rev. Nørb (Gern Blandsten)

LONELY CHINA DAY: Self-titled: CD
Wait, mellow electronic indie rock sucks in Chinese as much as it does in English? The language of craptastic has gone international. —Megan (Tag Team)

MACHINEGUN BLUES: Self-titled: CD
I like Kings Of Leon. Big deal! You wanna fight about it? I don't know if Machinegun Blues like them too or if they coincidentally have the same '70s rock influences. Honestly, if someone told me this was a Kings Of Leon demo I'd fully believe



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them. I'll be goddamned if the singer ain't got a handlebar mustache, too. None of this is to be misconstrued as disparaging comments. This is only a four song EP and it's doing its job... it's making me want to hear a full length. The hand-sewn cover is a nice touch, too. —Stevo (Not Bad)

MARKED MEN: *Fix My Brain*: CD

The Marked Men are hands down, without a doubt, the best band in Texas. This new album is a bit of a departure from the first two, but not in a bad way. It's much more along the lines of the *She Won't Know* single released late last year. It's still the good old Marked Men that we all know and love, with the nice mix of Jeff's gooey melted-cheese vocals and Mark's more angular voice. The only real difference here is the absence of the prominent sixteenth-note high hats that have become somewhat of a novelty in garage rock these days. Great production, minimalist artwork, expertly crafted songs—just go fucking get this, it rules! —Ben Snakepit (Swami)

MARKED MEN: *Fix My Brain*: LP

My favorite bands create their own universes and the Marked Men are one of my favorite bands. Sure, there are gravitational pulls from other sources—bands that loom large on the horizon like The Ramones—but influence is secondary to the Marked Men's own output. It's weird. I knew exactly what I was expecting from

this record before I plopped it on the turntable. "More *On the Outside*! More!" I didn't get what I'd expected. And was rewarded twice as much as I thought I'd be because here is a band—much like the Riverboat Gamblers in this respect—that lives so much inside their own heads that they're always a good twenty songs ahead of their listeners. They see and hear more in their songs than I ever could. They obsess, self-criticize, push and, in the end, where most bands are happy making their music be the equivalent of another shanty in a tent city ghetto, the Marked Men are making an entire universe (from magma to atmosphere to inhabitants). And this is what makes me so simultaneously happy and sad. Happy that anyone reading this review can pretty easily get a hold of these songs that'll make you fuckin' jump for joy. Sad, because douchebags play to douchebag-lovers by the millions and can live off of their music while the Marked Men all have to keep their day jobs and risk losing them to just go on tour. Open solicitation: if you don't like the vinyl (keep your CDs) after three plays, I'll pay you for it, including shipping. —Todd (Swami)

MÄSSMÖRD:

***Inget Liv/Ingen Död*: CD**

These Swedes serve up pissed-off political hardcore with loud guitars, driving beats, Nausea-styled male/vocals, and bilingual lyrics.

Would've loved a bit more originality, but it does hammer the ol' eardrums quite nicely as is. —Jimmy Alvarado (Crimes Against Humanity)

MEASURE {SA}, THE: *Historical Fiction*: LP

Progress comes when old solutions just don't quite work anymore. Bands that realize this very simple idea can excel at making great songs. The Measure {SA} sound concerned with the past, but they push it back: to the background, as a backdrop, and, ultimately, a springboard. And then they take center stage and play their own songs, brightly and powerfully. Although I hear passing points as far separated as the Pogues, Discount, and Bent Outta Shape, *Historical Fiction* is very far from a mess of gifts, poorly wrapped around someone else's notes, but a complete and utter surprise that reveals itself slowly with each additional listen. It's complex without being obtuse, melodic without artificial sweeteners, sincere without the "I like Jawbreaker. I like Converse. I ride a bike. Hug me. Coffee!" pitfalls. The entire record plays like it's holding you close while dancing and singing in your ear. Neck and neck with Fifth Hour Hero's *Not Revenge...* for coming completely out of left field and handing my ass to me. —Todd (Don Giovanni / Salinas)

MECCA NORMAL: *The Observer*: CD

I never really *got* Mecca Normal. With this album I continue to not get them. Yet I feel like I should like them because they are Canadian and because Jean Smith was apparently the one who coined the phrase "riot grrrl." But this is the kind of album that I will never listen to again. I don't like songs that are really just long poems set to music with no choruses, hooks, or structure. Perhaps this makes me shallow, or simple, or something. I really just want music that makes me excited and happy and this does neither. —Jennifer Whiteford (Kill Rock Stars)

METHADONES, THE:

***21st Century Power Pop Riot*: CD**

This CD is chockfull of covers of obscure and once-hit wonder songs from the '70s and '80s power pop phenomenon. It's simply delish. My favorite track to have on repeat in the car has to be "Back of My Hand," a Jags cover. So friggin' great. The songs feature cameo appearances from members of Dillinger Four and the Copyrights, among others, and an amazing guest lead vocal performance on "Goodbye to You" by Annie of The Soviettes. This album has me amped. I can't wait for the Methadones to hunker down and get back to writing original tunes. Will someone offer these guys a multi-billion dollar deal already? We

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MIND CONTROLS: Self-titled: CD

Every now and again (though not nearly enough) a band comes along that you love from the first note. It just finds a place among your other favorite records and refuses to budge. Mind Controls don't seem to be in danger of leaving my rotation for a very long time, but (and probably because) they're a hard one to nail down. There will be a hint of The Undertones (like the opening of the album—especially in the drums) in one song, and then a hint of the New York Dolls in another, but at no time does it feel like that hint is anything more than that: a mere tip of the hat to some possible influences without ever coming near imitation. Mind Controls have taken elements from what I can only imagine is a pretty impressive record collection to build something that feels fresh and new. Neighbors and roommates be damned because this has been cranked for a month now and I don't see me turning it off any time soon. The best record of the year so far. —Megan (Dirtnap)

MISS ALEX WHITE AND THE RED

ORCHESTRA: Self-titled: LP

Imagine a less-amped and groove-locked BellRays and that's a good indication of what to expect from this record. It's more atmospheric, moody, and restrained—the watershed is definitely concerned with showcasing Ms. White's stellar voice—but the power's not muted. Sort of like the Detroit Cobra's gig (which I like, as well) and mid-period Stooges. It's something your parents may like, and I say that in a diplomatic, "Let's find some common ground so I don't have to listen to U2's Christmas album and feel like killing you all" thoughts during the holidays kind of way without you, yourself, gagging or feeling like a tool. —Todd (In The Red)

MODERN LIFE IS WAR: Witness: LP

There are many, many things in this world that I don't understand: how the pyramids were built, correct syntax of the French language, where babies come from, and how five totally disparate individuals can manage to get together and make a record that's both this searing and punishing and also this consistently fucking *catchy*. Modern Life Is War somehow manages to utilize the operatic, mid-tempo hardcore template that bands like Tragedy and From Ashes Rise have perfected over the years—but they've also built on it, expanded on it—the last thing you're going to find on *Witness* is anything resembling

musical hero worship or stylistic rip offs. The best thing that Modern Life Is War has going for them on this record (apart from its inherent musical seamlessness and power) is the fact that vocalist Jeffrey Eaton is penning some of the best lyrics I've read in fucking years regarding class issues, the Iraq war, small town economics, desperation, hope, and more—and he's in a *hardcore* band, and he's *pissed off* but you *can hear every goddamn word he's saying*. Ten points right there. So when you couple smart, engaging, furious, and discernable lyrics with music that is unremitting, merciless, yet also so goddamn hook-laden that you'll have a hard time doing anything else *but* listen to the record when you put it on—roll all that together and you're coming close to what this band has accomplished with *Witness*. Easily one of the best records put out this year. —Keith Rosson (Lifeline)

MODERN MACHINES, THE:

Take It, Somebody!: CD

The Springsteen comparisons are bound to follow these guys. From the opening *Nebraska*-reminiscent harmonica wail to the way that they combine pop hooks with a blues/blues-influenced rock base, the similarities are there. They tour constantly and put on a hell of a live show. As people, I'm quite fond of them, and as a band, I think they're getting better with each record. I liked *Thwap!* I was surprisingly and pleasantly

impressed by how much I liked *Taco Blessing*. I got an earlier recording of *Take It, Somebody*, and didn't take it out of my headphones for over a week straight. And that may have been the problem. When I got the official release, I listened to it a few times before putting the earlier recording back on because something felt slightly off. There were a few times on the final recording that it feels a little too thought out (like in some of the vocal inflections), whereas on the earlier session, it feels organic. It's still a damn fine record that I've been listening to (and will continue to) steadily, I just prefer it with a little more rawness. —Megan (Dirtnap)

MOMENT OF YOUTH:

Sometimes: 7" EP

They claim to have started out as "an incredibly authentic Teen Idles carbon copy," but I hear more Youth Brigade (DC) than anything else in there. Heavy guitars, thrashy rhythms, mostly personal lyrics—this is some decent noise here. Supposedly limited to three hundred copies, so all you collector jerk-offs better start scrambling. —Jimmy Alvarado (Firestarter)

MOTORS, THE: 1: CD

MOTORS, THE:

Approved by the Motors: CD

MOTORS, THE: Tenement Steps: CD

Truth be told, "Airport" from *Approved by the Motors* was the only

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song I'd ever heard from these guys, and that was only 'cause Steve Jones played it recently on his *Jonesy's Jukebox* radio program. So, yeah, my experience with this band has been quite limited. Here's what I've managed to deduce: they were a late-'70s U.K. pub-turned-new-wave band best remembered for the aforementioned "Airport," which apparently still finds itself featured in the odd commercial now and then. My impressions of their music are they started off as pretty much your average pub rock band and kinda veered more in a 10CC direction (at least that's what I'm hearing) and by *Tenement Steps* the tunes could've easily fit into a Broadway show with a little rearranging. Sounds like I'm totally slagging 'em off, I know, but they are quite good at what they do, even if I'm not feeling the "new wave" vibe from this. "Crazy Alice" rips in fine pub rock fashion, though. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

MOUTH SEWN SHUT:

Pandemic=Solution: CD

Rough'n'tumble, angry thrash here, not unlike label mates Toxic Narcotic. Lyrics are topical and occasionally misanthropic, and there's a weird ska/reggae undertow to some of the songs that keeps things interesting. Not bad. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

MR. PLOW:

Chairman Plow's Little Red Book: CD
Vancouver's favorite acoustic comedy master is back with another laugh-

fest. If you've heard Plow before, you know what to expect as he doesn't change it up much. For the uninitiated, Mr. Plow is the bastard child of Raffi and GG Allin (a fact that I'm sure I've mentioned before in these very pages). He plays songs that sound as if your child would be stoked... until the lyrics kick in, that is. This time out he slays MSN, emo, Ted McGinley, gay skinheads, and all the usual sucking and fucking that's fit for acoustic accompaniment. The second half of the disc has a smattering of remixes of older songs with a full band that sound great, too. If you've got a sick sense of humor, it's worth checking out. —Ty Stranglehold (Crusty)

MUDHONEY:

Under a Billion Suns: CD

Psychedelia and old-style hard rock dominate this release. The more you listen, the flatter it sounds. Some of the political lyrics are very similar to those of well-known anti-Vietnam War songs (especially on track five, "Hard-on for War"). The resemblance completes the '60s feel of the album, but doesn't do much else for it. —Chris Pepus (Sub Pop)

NECKERS, THE:

Love and Infection: CD

A-M-A-Z-I-N-G! Mid-tempo poppy rock'n'roll simply does not get any better than this. If you are a fan of the Real Kids and The Devil Dogs, you are gonna be in bliss with this one.

Fans of the Obsoletes/Yesterday's Kids will find a lot to like here as well. One of the all time great band logos as well. Chalk up another classic Canadian band to take the torch from the Pointed Sticks, The Modernettes, Chixdiggitt, and Teenage Head. This is the record of the summer without a doubt. *Love and Infection* is a classic record! —Mike Frame (Self-released)

NEON MANIACS /

TORCHA SHED: Split: 7"

Neon Maniacs: Huh. The lead singer kinda lilt, like the lead singer of the Parasites. For a pop punk band like Parasites it's not so weird, but for a punk band that claims to play "electric tones that will shake your bones," while singing about zombies, the singer's voice sounds so sunny. When they sing, "They're going to eat you," the result is more attacking a bowl of Count Chocula and less *The Return of the Living Dead* badass chainsaw a zombie dog in half action. Not bad, just disarming. I was expecting more puss, ooze, and larvae. Torcha Shed: "Meet Me in the George Bar" starts off promising with warbly sirens of guitars veering into the listener, cutting through pub noise, and providing a nice off-balance quality that's woven through the entire song. It's got a tension much in the vein of Cock Sparrer and the Partisans. Musically compelling, but the lyrics are eh. Punk rock about pubs: it's musical territory

that's had more than its share of pint-scarred champions. (Youth Brigade's "Old Man Bars" is a great example of a contemporary band hitting this subject right.) Chalk it up to a song that if it had different lyrics, it'd get played much more. —Todd (Puke'n'vomit)

NEW BRUISES:

Transmit! Transmit!: CD

I saw these guys in St. Pete, FL the night before The Fest. They had eight hundred guitars until I sobered up momentarily to see they had three, which still seems like a lot to me. They continued to play every show every day of The Fest, or maybe it was only once or twice more, but it seemed like they were everywhere. Maybe I should have paid more attention because they sound like they'd be really fun live. —Megan (Kiss of Death)

NOFX:

Wolves in Wolves' Clothing: CD

I'm not going to blow air up your ass. I cannot say anything original that hasn't already been said about this band. I have total respect for them. They stuck to their guns and do what they do. If you like them, you already own this. I would like to see Fat Mike grow his Misfits devil lock again like when he was in high school and he was just called Mike. Oh, yeah! I like the CD. —Donofthedeath (Fat)



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NONE MORE BLACK:

This Is Satire: CD

I was waiting for a wow factor. But I was not bowled over. I can't find anything bad to really say. I was not moved. The songs are catchy and they are a great continuation from their last release, *File Under Black*. As the wind changes direction, so does my interest meter. I feel it is a release that has to have multiple listens under my belt before I decide to write it off. There is variety and also familiarity. The vocals have the standard gravely growl. The production is top notch, as with most of the Fat releases, with everything sounding bright and bold. Maybe speed and more aggression is what I needed. —Donofthedeath (Fat)

NONE MORE BLACK:

This Is Satire: CD

You hear that? It's the sound of the bar being raised. You see that over there? That's the high water mark Kid Dynamite left before rolling back out to sea and out of sight. Those guys above that line are None More Black, and this is where they pull off what guys who come from such intense pedigrees rarely do. I like to call it the "Ian Mackaye" or "defying the musical black hole." Allow me to most likely unnecessarily elaborate. Sometimes you're in a band so intense it's like a black hole. Anything else before and after just gets sucked in to it and all anyone can see is that one huge swirling

awesome thing. Your new band can struggle all it wants but it's going to get sucked right in to that hole. Sometimes though, you start another band with some guys and call it Fugazi or in this case None More Black and you can pull away. You can live alongside that black hole and sometimes even out grow it. *This is Satire* is where None More Black effectively pulls away. This is where people will cease to predicate discussion of their band with Kid Dynamite ever after. This is also the first perfect record of 2006. Emotional but with a sense of humor. Pop punk but with enough long hairs to make it fucking rock. I'd go so far as to say Jason Shevchuk is right up there with Jeff Pezzati and Glenn Danzig in his mastery of the "whoa-oh" and he's at the top of his game. Some people might consider the "whoa-oh" to be a cheap trick, a substitute for insightful lyrics. Those people are fucking cocks. I theorize that it would take a team of scientists at least twenty-five years to figure out the mechanics of how good this record is. It's like they achieved the rock equivalent to perpetual motion or something. —Stevo (Fat Wreck)

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS:

Hospitals: 12" EP

This is amazingly miserable pop in that it layers the most misery-laden lyrics I've heard in some time over the catchiest, upbeat pop melodies. Lyrics like, "I'll tie it tight around

my neck and kick the chair out with my legs because I want to fucking die today," and, "So night after night I'll be staying up late. I'll be fighting off the shakes and puking out the window repressing things you can never know," make me want, on one hand, to give the guy a hug and make it all better. But, on the other hand, if it ever was all better, would they still be writing these amazing songs? I'd hope so, but, since I don't know them, I'll take the sorrow for the songs. The only thing I have negatively to say about it is something I realized the first time I saw them play: The song "Hospitals" is so close musically to Toys That Kill's (who were also playing that night) "Two Billion Bastards" that I thought they were covering it in homage to them. —Megan (Rock Bottom)

ORDER OF THE VULTURE:

Self-titled: CD-R

And the award for "Best Kreator/Sodom Impersonation by a So-Called 'Hardcore Punk' Band" goes to.... —Jimmy Alvarado (Aborted Society)

OSAKA POPSTAR: ...and the

American Legends of Punk: CD

The line-up is impressive. A band that features the Misfits manager, John Cafiero on vocals with Jerry Only (Misfits), Dez Cadena (Black Flag, Misfits), Ivan Julian (Voidoids), and Marky Ramone (Ramones, duh). But the sum of its parts do not add up to anything other than a concept

album of Japanese anime mixed with overly produced bubblegum pop punk with an early '70s feel to it and some covers thrown in. —Donofthedeath (Misfits)

PERSUADERS: *Forced to Fuck: CD*

One of the most p-r-i-m-i-t-i-v-e bands I've ever heard: dirty punk rock in the fuzz gutter like you wouldn't believe. New Orleans total rejects King Louie, Jason "Panzer" Craft (who now make up Kajun SS), and Shaggy made a full-length and some 7"s in the '90s—they are all here, plus unreleased tracks. You can't be this totally raw without some misses on the anthology, but there are incredible static classics like "Savage" and "Left for Dead," too. Hurry up and order from the label and you can get their *Live and Shattered* CD too, recorded live in Feb 1999. —Speedway Randy (Shattered)

PHANTOM ROCKERS:

On the Loose: CD

It's the return of the Phantom Rockers. Twenty years of standard psycho fare and the song remains the same: schizophrenia, mutants, boogiemens, jungles, psychos, and king rockers. The new line up includes musicians from Kim Lenz, Atomic Fiends, and Sick City Daggers. Unfortunately, uninspiring and unremarkable. —Jessica T (Split 7)

POLIDICKS:

No Peace? No Chance: CD

The problem I've always had with the crusty, political punk bands is that although I like the lyrics and the idea of what they're doing, it often comes across as screechy and squelchy. Polidicks manage to avoid that trap for the most part. Hard, fast, and loud is the order for the day and they serve it up in a palatable fashion. Add in the clever samples and movie clips and we've got us a winner. Wait, it does slide into that screech from time to time, but not enough to ruin the record. Good stuff. —Ty Stranglehold (Wounded Paw)

POPSTERS, THE: All of You: CD

I've been sitting here trying to figure out why a band would call themselves The Popsters. Sure, they play some of the best pop punk stuff I've heard in ages, but why so literal? It started to dawn on me when I listened to the lyrics a little closer. Odd wording and backwards grammar. A check of the liner notes revealed my suspicions. Italians singing in English. There you have it. I cannot and will not fault these guys for their ridiculous band name because there has to be a translation error. Yeah, that's it... Anyway, let's talk about the music. If you can bear any more Canadian references from me, I think they sound a lot like Doughboys and Bum: two of the best pop bands we Canucks ever had

to offer. Yep. The Popst... I can't even type it again... these guys are that good. Throw a Mass Giorgini mix on it and there you have it. The Tom Petty cover is pretty good, too. —Ty Stranglehold (Incessant Drip)

POPSTERS, THE: All of You: CD

Mid-tempo melodicore/pop punk from Italy that you would never believe is not an American band. I would have been all over this in the pop punk wave of the late '90s. But as too much of any one thing gets old, I really have to say that this band is average. Even the cover of Tom Petty's "American Girl" is played straight up with nothing added. I was hoping for so much more since it was coming from outside the states and released here. —Donofthedeath (Incessant Drip)

POPZILLAS, THE: The Incredible Adventures of Pandora Pop: CD

This is really unique and interesting. As far as I can tell from the translated-from-German one sheet, this is a German band playing a concept album that I think is supposed to be a soundtrack to a Japanese manga story. It doesn't make any sense, but I like it. It's really pro-produced sounding pop with ethereal female vocals. It's nice, I could listen to this a few times for sure, but I just don't really understand what they're trying to do. —Ben Snakepit (Wolverine)

PUT-ONS, THE:

Schooldays in Disgrace: CD

I'm not sure if these guys are intentionally striving to be racist, but—giving them the benefit of the doubt—maybe equating having "a stable of foxy whores" (among other things) with being Black, or covering Cheech & Chong's "Mexican Americans," which was essentially an in-joke that really doesn't come off the same way as a cover tune, are such good ideas. Hell, I'm surprised no one has handed them their own asses on a platter yet. Outside of that, this is vaguely snotty college-punk fodder. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Front Teeth)

RAISED FIST:

Sound of the Republic: CD

Burning Heart put this out so I'm thinking maybe these guys are from some Scandinavian country. Heavy metal with screamed vocals. The drummer slaps the skins to the same beat every song. The vocals are sometimes screamed in a rap style, which always bugs the fuck out of me. Here's my advice: if you are in a metal band, for God's sake, at least appreciate the classics like Maiden or the filthy styles of Neurosis, Dead and Gone, and Buzzoven. The lyrics seem like they at least realize the world is fucked. That's a plus. I just don't like the music. —Buttertooth (Epitaph/Burning Heart)

RECTANGLES:

Suspended Animation: 7" EP

They play like a single-finger-saluting, mean, fighting-side-of-me Devo. If that's not so helpful, imagine new wave punk (more Triggers, less Epoxies) with rayguns that could provide the soundtrack to an episode of the *Twilight Zone* which ends unhappily and features dismemberment. At their best, they slither and shake mechanically—like a dancing cyborg with a noose around his neck—while the keyboard sounds like it's being played by a brain floating in bubbling neon liquid. At their worst, well, they're not too bad; just a little clonky like they've been in the morgue a little long and have started to stiffen. Definitely a band with promise. I'd like to have them toe up against that surly Servotron—in an epic battle of meat vs. metal—and watch the sparks fly. —Todd (Discourage)

REGULATIONS: Electric Guitar: LP

Sometimes I wish that time machines were real. I would take these Swedes, drop 'em in a late-'70s Huntington Beach back yard and watch bands like the Slashers and China White shit themselves. Side one of this is their most recent recordings, and there is much to marvel at here, but the crème de la crème here is the two EPs collected on side two, which are fucking monstrous examples of all that is good about punk rock—catchy

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RESISTORS, THE: Demo: CD-R

Average and generic mid-tempo punk out of the Los Angeles area. Vocals go out of key and out of time all over the place. The background vocals do the same. The guitar sound is a little buried in the mix and could have used more distortion or compression. The only things that sound good to me are the bass and the drums. The raw and sloppy sound might have excited me circa 1980, but in 2006 it sounds like I have heard thousands of bands like this and I don't remember most of them. It's like listening to a fourth generation band that sounds like the 4 Skins. More time together writing songs and being together will hopefully let the band grow and develop to where their songs might be memorable. —Donofthedeath (The Resistors)

RHINO BUCKET:

And Then It Got Ugly: CD

Okay, let's take a look at this. We've got a band name in stenciled letters? Check. Distressed yellow/orange picture of police beating on someone? Check. My official "book by the cover" call on this would be a SoCal angst punk outfit with delusions of being the next Adolescents or Social Distortion. Let's take a lis-

ten. "Wha..?" I didn't see AC/DC coming, that's for damn sure. I'm not talking about, "Rock'n'roll, so it reminds me of AC/DC." I'm saying it sounds *exactly* like fuckin' AC/DC! The first time I listened to this was in the stereo at work. My ex-rocker manager comes out of the darkroom and demands to know what AC/DC record this is because he doesn't recognize it. It's that exact! It may be a compliment to those guys, but it ain't working for me. I can appreciate the original Aussie powerhouse, but somewhere in the back of my mind I still say, "This is the music of the bastards who beat the shit outta me when I was a kid." Even more so for these rip off artists. —Ty Stranglehold (Acetate)

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS:

Keep Me from Drinking: 7"

Words can't describe how pissed I was when this showed up in the mail and it was warped to shit. I'm a wee bit obsessed with the Gamblers as of late and the thought of two new tracks coming in the mail was an exciting endeavor. Well, I managed to play the record and get the gist of the tunes between the warbling and skipping. Both are great tunes in their own right but I can see how they don't quite fit into the perfection that is their latest full length. I'm going to have to track another copy of this down. —Ty Stranglehold (Volcom)

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS:

To the Confusion of Our Enemies: CD

For quite awhile now, there has been a lot of buzz about the Riverboat Gamblers. For some reason, perhaps due to my cynicism, and pessimist attitude towards everything, I didn't jump on the Gambler bandwagon. I didn't take the time to listen to them and I was skeptical. So when I got this CD, I put a lot of listening time into it—I mean, is it really possible to be as good as everyone says? Quite frankly, yes. After a couple listens, this CD grew on me and grew on me fast. The opening song, "True Crime" totally hooked me and is by far one of the best songs on the album. The production on the CD is fantastic and you can't help but feel the energy these guys exude in their music. Like always, I have a couple favorite songs on the CD that I treasure more than the rest, which I keep on repeat for days at a time. They are "True Crime," "Don't Bury Me...I'm Still Not Dead," "Biz Loves Sluts" (although there is one part before he goes into his spiel about chocolate, cinnamon and whip cream where he sounds a little like Fred Durst), "The Song We Used to Call 'Wasting Time,'" and "Rent Is Due" (which has carved out a special place in my heart). —Jenny Moncayo (Volcom)

SEXY: Boma Yel: CD

I can't describe how happy I was to see this when it came in. *Por Vida* is one of my favorite albums. But this

walks a very different path than *Por Vida*. The instant infection of the songs, that immediate catchiness that made each track of *Por Vida* essential from first listen, just isn't there. I've listened to this over and over trying to get it under my skin, and it has to a degree. It almost sounds as if this would be the album that precedes *Por Vida*, the album they would have grown from and built off of, so I almost see it as a regression rather than a new step for them. I was worried that it may have been my bias due to my adoration of *Por Vida*, so I got tricky. I'd put it on for people who loved the first album without telling them what it was. They would listen with half an ear and then by about the fourth song ask who it was, and were always surprised that it was Sexy. With time, it's grown on me, and I find some songs (like the run of "Choke the World" through "T.K.I.Y.T.") that I play over and over again. It's still a strong record; I just had really, really high expectations. —Megan (Plan-it-x-south)

SKIN DISORDER:

Scars and Stripes: 7" EP

Given the cover art, band name, and song titles like "Soldier Skin," I was kinda hopin' for a "comedy" act. While their "traditional" N.Y. skin slant is, indeed, funny, it's not the kind of funny they intended or I was expecting. Pretty purple vinyl, though. —Jimmy Alvarado (Headache)



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SKITSYSTEM: Stigmata: CD

From the first note on this release, you know you are going to get an ass kickin.' The production is so big that it would make most bands out there sell off their little sister to get that kind of sound. Guitar sound that is crunchy, big, and bold. Bass that sounds punchy and bottom heavy with a light touch of distortion. Drums that have been tuned and mixed well so that you can hear every item that is being punished. Vocals that are sung in the Swedish dialect with English translations provided for lyrical understanding of what is being sung in a throaty, yelled delivery. This now a long-running band continues to be one of the premier bands in the crust genre: with fast and strong songs with metallic overtones that are exciting. Not one song is a throw away. This band epitomizes what is so good about the bands from Sweden and Skitsystem is a seasoned band that clearly shows newcomers that they need to bring their "A" game if they have to play on the same bill with them. —Donofthedeath (Havoc)

SORE THUMBS, THE: Listen Up!!: CD

First heard this band on the Pirates Press 7" box set a while back and thought they were pretty good. Two songs on that, fourteen on this, but there's not a dull spot on the record. Think Hostage or TKO Records, wide-legged guitar stances, broad ties and dress shirts rolled up to show tat

sleeves. At least, that's what I get from it; it's SoCal (does anyone use that term anymore without cringing?) '77 punk with a modern flair, with just a few jagged teeth around the edges to keep from getting a "power pop" reference. And don't think I'm slagging it, because I'm not—this shit's riddled with more hooks than my grandpa's fucking tackle box; they know how to craft a song, they make a hell of a sweet racket for a three piece, they grasp when to allow one instrument to take precedence over the others, and the lyrics are pretty articulate and sincere in a genre that relies maybe a little too much on the bland "rock'n'roll party" shtick. They make it to Portland anytime soon, I'll be glad to drunken high-five 'em and blather on about how awesome the show was. If *Listen Up!!* is any indication at all, it would be. —Keith Rosson (Radio)

SPACE CRETINS: Rocket Roll: CD

This is really good! Awesome, high energy, poppy, glommy punk. Sounds like Zowie Fenderblast from the Lee Harvey Oswald band fronting the Groovie Ghoulies, oh yeah! Songs just come marching at you, one after another, although "Star Kiss" is a cool mid-tempo tune that breaks things up. Really cool glommy vocals and strong punk songs. Fans of the Dickies, Zolar X, and Black Halos will wanna be all over this. —Mike Frame (Killing Pig)

SPEEDBUGGY USA:**The City That God Forgot: CD**

Speedbuggy, once one of L.A.'s pre-eminent cowpunk bands, have transcended to successful alt country on this, their seventh full-length album. Infusing Bakersfield country, Delta blues, zydeco, and brass band with non sequitur raucous Pogues irreverence and dreamy Mazzy Star-like instrumentations, Speedbuggy creates a mature and heterogeneous album. Heartfelt, sincere, and overall upbeat, parts of this mellifluous album reflect the sadness and loss felt by survivors of Hurricane Katrina, which deeply affected the band. All profits from this album's sales are being donated to Habitat for Humanity's Katrina Relief Fund. Art, writing, and other services were donated to the band to produce this album for charity. —Jessica T (Split 7)

STARS & STRIPES:**One Man Army: CD**

At first inclination, I thought this was an American version of Hard Skin. Really, really well played oi with really, really hilarious and deeply satirical lyrics. I guess I was part right because Stars & Stripes do play really good music with really hilarious lyrics. It turns out that it's not so much a joke as it is a side project for Choke from Slapshot, though. Here's a quick run through. The first three songs are about beating the shit out of people. The next one is about realizing your dreams and life are too short

to be mean (?!); follow that with a couple telling us to lighten up and "shut the fuck up." Now we've got a soccer song (in North America it is called soccer. People who are from North America have no reason to call it anything else) and an ode to invading Europe. The disc closes with two songs that I can relate to: hockey and getting drunk. The getting drunk one quickly sinks into going out to beat up rival soccer hooligans though, so I got lost again. If it turns out that this is a joke band, then kudos to them for pulling it off in such a way that it's hard to tell. If it's not, well, I was still entertained. Musically, I'm thinking in the neighborhood of Menace or Sham 69. A fun listen. —Ty Stranglehold (I Scream)


STORM THE TOWER:**Four Songs: 7" EP**

It's been a loooong time since Storm The Tower put a record out, and they've gone through a lot of changes during that time. This new 7" is a lot more punk and a lot less hardcore than their previous releases, with Chris' vocals evoking the early '90s sound of Heroin or John Henry West. Tightly played and well recorded, these four songs pack quite a punch. —Ben Snakepit (Little Deputy)

STUPORHERO:**It Would Be Nice to Wake Up: CD**

The first song on this album is called, "Cherry Blossom Cool." What does that mean? Your guess is as good as

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mine. This is the kind of quirky indie rock that I liked in the mid-nineties when I spent a lot of time driving around in my parents' minivan listening to every Lemonheads album ever made. I'm happy to say my tastes have evolved, and I found this album fairly tiresome. I'm not sure why the male member of this band is the lead singer, since his voice is kind of whiny and grating. Four songs in, we are teased with an excellent track called "Get High School" where one of the band's female members sings lead in a charming, unpretentious way. If the other songs on the album were more like that one, this might have a chance of landing in my heavy rotation pile. —Jennifer Whiteford (Basement Tape)

TENNESSEE TEARJERKERS, THE: *Dirty Nails: 7"*

I want to open a truck stop and have a jukebox that only has 45s from Jack Oblivian Yarber. This good times, rockin' single (already out of print) has songs by Yarber and bandmate Margaret Garrett, and an Ian Hunter cover ("Original Mixed up Kid"). Rock kids would sit next to the country truckers and hookers and everyone would get along great, share the sugar, tell stories, and the waitresses would actually live off their tips. —Speedway Randy (Bancroft)

THERMAN MERMAN: *Demo Delish: CD-R*

Eight songs in under ten minutes. In those eight songs, they manage to

cover "White Christmas," and I don't hate it. It may have to do with the fact that I got it in June, when I'm not inundated with Christmas carols. They also cover topics such as love and Kurt Russell. They say they're influenced by Crimpshrine, D4, and the Bouncing Souls, which makes sense. —Megan (Therman Merman)

TIME AGAIN: *The Stories Are True: CD*

As a fan of Rancid—yes, I'm a fan of Rancid—I have to say, I'm a little annoyed, and very confused. So confused that I had to listen to this CD several times to try and come up with a theory as to why this is okay. Why would Hellcat put out an album that sounds exactly like Rancid? Yes, there are several straightforward answers, like easy money, etc. But really... for some reason, I feel like a shitty makeshift computer: it does not compute. Let's see, the CD displays a sticker that explains Tim Armstrong is featured on the track "The Stories Are True." Well, it sounds like the whole CD features Mr. Armstrong. The vocals are so identical that I even got into a silly debate on whether it was Tim or not. Although I know it is just the work of a very good clone, I couldn't help but make a silly wager, just on the basis of pure disbelief. Honestly, you could spend a good amount of time trying to decipher Tim from the lead singer, Daniel, but don't be as lame as me. Needless to say, this album is very comparable to Rancid.

And most of the lyrics cover the topics of living on the streets, being homeless, and being a "Streetwalker." I guess kids will eat this up. Maybe if I was younger, I would too. Time will never tell. And my theory: if you get a tattoo of Tim's initials—the singer has T.A. on his wrist—and then cleverly cover it up by naming your band with the same initials, your super love is rewarded with a record deal. —Jenny Moncayo (Hellcat)

TOYS THAT KILL: *Shanked!: CD*

Toys That Kill's music is simply spell-binding, catchy, and well produced. Always. This new album is no exception. I must admit that other than the debut, every time I get a new album it takes me a few listens to tune into their wavelength... but once I do, it's there forever. It's like getting hurt bad and getting prescribed 800mg Ibuprofen and being told you have to take two pills a couple times a day. The first time you open the bottle, those two huge pills don't seem to go down your throat so easy... but once they do, you feel oh sooo good. Be warned, you listen to this album stoned, drunk, wasted off something else, or simply high on life it'll become your best friend by track three. Now when's that rumored split with D4 going to materialize? —Mr. Z (Recess)

TRANZMITORS: *Some Girls b/w Dancing in the Front Row: 7"*

The image I get when listening to the Tranzmitors is an expert telephone

switchboard operator—the type who would plug in lines by hand after the call's placed—only with a time machine. So, you're getting a call from 1977: Buzzcocks, Gang of Four, Undertones, Jam, all hanging on one line, but cross-switched to 2006 without losing clarity, without static. Your musical door, today, is kicked off the frame, and in comes a band, all instruments a-blasting, shooting you full of musical notes. Like the Exploding Hearts, there's something vital to be said about freshly broken angles, bent and infected melodies, redirecting stray lines back to the master strokes to the likes of Elvis Costello—not to make a shrine—but to push older ideas further than they initially went. And, holy smokes, The Tranzmitors sound like they were born nailed to their instruments. Wow. —Todd (La-Ti-Da)

TRASHIES: *Life Sucks Trash Fuck: CD*

I really want to like the Trashies. And I don't think I'm that far off from it. Synth-driven low-fi stuff that's pretty difficult to not dance to, especially when you see them live. My worry is the shtick (and I'm assuming it is a shtick) of being white trash. They wear tight, short denim shorts, have garbage cans on stage, and in my memory there was a mullet or at least a rat tail. I grew up in a very rural (read: ten miles to the closest gas station) area in Maine. I had someone on my school bus route put a tele-

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phone pole up in the front yard of their trailer one day. About a week later, the pole had sprouted various antlers and looked like a totem pole of sorts. Another week passed, and the antlers were adorned with bras and women's underwear. No explanation, it was just what they did. I also grew up surrounded by people who killed their food, and couldn't think of a better way to spend a weekend than "Goin' muddin', guy." And sure, I had my difference of opinions with a large group of them, and a lot of their kids made my life hell through high school, but some of them were also the nicest, most considerate people I've met. They led somewhat simple lives in comparison to others, but they chose to live that way and they were happy with it. But no one, no matter how happy they were with their life, wanted to be called white trash. And it was a term that was never used lightly. So, I was quite shocked when I moved to Los Angeles as "white trash couture" was taking over. People began wearing mesh hats, paying a hundred dollars for a mullet, and wearing pre-worn, pre-torn, pre-stained clothes. Even that I could take, but when a girl I worked with bragged about how "white trash" she'd been the night before because she'd eaten a sandwich, I was pushed too far. So, with the Trashies, I don't know them. I don't know where they're coming from. I don't know if they're hopping on a

trend that leaves a bad taste in my mouth, or if (as I'm hoping) they're doing something else. I plan on keeping listening and asking them the next time they come through town. —Megan (Mortville)

TRASHIES:

Life Sucks Trash Fuck: CD

This album is a sloppy, retarded, trashcore, punch-each-other-in-the-groin, pogo party! I dare you to listen to this album without thinking about doing something stupid. Alright, so it's hard to do anything without the contemplation of stupid things, but this album is definitely a catalyst. I'd like to think that the song "Sweatpants Boner" sums up the true emotions of this musical group, but whether they like it or not the song "I H8 U Motherfuckers" truly displays why this style of music and this band are important. This song is an anthem for anyone who's fucking sick of everything, especially anthems. —Daryl (Mortville)

TRASHIES: Taz Tattoo: 7"

More trash rock that gets me wanting to dance, but my opinion from the CD hasn't been changed yet. —Megan (The Party's Over, no address given)

UNSACRED HEARTS, THE:

In Defense of Fort Useless: CD

They're supposed to be some rock/alt-rock hybrid, but what I'm

hearing is a less country/more arty Gun Club. I'm not quite sure that's the intention. There's also the occasional punk rock freak-out to be found as well. Ultimately, they ain't bad at what they're slingin', which I guess is the most important part. —Jimmy Alvarado (Serious Business)

US BOMBS: We're the Problem: CD

Duane Peters is back with his flagship band. I like all of his projects, but it's always the Bombs that do it best for me. The new record is no exception. I really don't think that there's anyone reading this who hasn't at least heard a song or two, so you know the deal. Out of control, Sex Pistols-style punk, with a hint of '50s doo-wop and a true American classic at the wheel. The choruses are huge and so are the guitars. DP is as gravely as ever. Get on your liquor store cruiser and head down to the records store and get this now. It's the soundtrack to your next pool session. —Ty Stranglehold (Sailor's Grave)

VAGINASORE JR: 7"

If there's a specific sound to barbeques, benders, and horseshoes, this would be it. Imagine a backyard full of friends with beards, kids and dogs, and Dan Padilla (the man and the band), and here's your soundtrack. It makes me miss Tampa. —Megan (ADD/ So Intense)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Anti-Disco League Vol. 1: CD

So far as I'm able to tell, this is an international comp of oi bands put together by someone in The Templars, and featuring the Templars, Deadline, Urban Riot, Crashed Out, Bulldog Samurai, Counterattack, Stomper 98, and others. The styles are diverse enough considering the genre and most of the tunes aren't too terrible or anything. Ultimately, though, no one really stands out here, so it's pretty much average as far as modern comps go. —Jimmy Alvarado (Templecombe)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Class Pride World Wide 3: CD

When these guys say "world wide," they mean it. Here we have a compilation of working class bands spanning the globe and running the gamut of genres of punk, hardcore, and oi. As with almost every compilation out there, there's gold and there's clunkers. This one beats the average with great tunes by Union Made (Canada), Discipline (Holland), Boiler (Hungary), among a haystack of bands from countries like Italy, Chile, Yugoslavia, Argentina, Japan, England, and the U.S. Well, Russian oi isn't all that great, but it can't stop this comp from being as great as it is. It must have been a hell of an undertaking getting the music from all of these bands and communicating with

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them all. I'd say it was worth it. —Ty Stranglehold (Insurgence)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Dudes Tunes Volume II: Dudin' Out: CD

If you like things that are totally bitch or listening to crucial tunes at a dudebeque, this is pretty essential. With Butt, Boris The Sprinkler, and Lord Dudenheim And His Royal Dudes, can you really go wrong? Big fat doubt it. So, coldie-up, order some 'Zas, throw this in the deck, and start Toddin' it up. —Megan (Dudes Magazine)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Give Em the Boot V: CD

Okay, I'll say it: I actually own just about the entire *GETB* series—I'm a sucker for cheapo label samplers, especially when you run across 'em used for a buck. And while it's decidedly uncool to say so, there's usually about a handful of pretty great songs on them. Granted, there's always a decent amount of tripe as well, but it's always nice to hear stuff from the Slackers, Leftover Crack, etc.—I have yet to buy any of their records, but I always enjoy hearing them on comps. That said, I think Hellcat may have finally shot its wad with this series. Shit's pretty played out at this point; *V* has the fewest songs of any of them, and so much of it is reshaped, second- and third-rate streetpunk or ska/reggae stuff that just has no staying power. There are

only a few standouts this time—Left Alone, Time Again, and the Heart Attacks. And anyone'll tell you, three good songs out of eighteen is pretty much blowing it. Plus it's offset by absolutely inane, dipshit songs by Roger Miret And The Disasters, Orange, and a host of other bands that just zip right by without making any impact at all. —Keith Rosson (Hellcat)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Innate Rebellion: CD

Resistant Culture: They sound markedly less straight-up speed metal than they did back in the '80s, when they were called Resistant Militia and we shared many an East L.A. backyard, but Tony's growl remains and the lyrics are just as rebellious. Nice to hear something new from 'em. Fallas De Sistema: Bilingual (though mostly in Spanish), political hardcore addressing the A.L.F., war, and "Musica para la resistencia." One of the singers sounds like the dude from Lodo Y Asfalto. Resist And Exist: Another band I remember from way back, in this case the early '90s/Media Children anarcho-punk crowd. More political hardcore with the dual male/female vocal styling made popular by Nausea and others. Contravene: Another male/female vocal band. These guys have more metal in their guitars and the vocalists, however flat their resulting efforts,

actually try to sing. —Jimmy Alvarado (Spiral)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Killed by Trash: CD

Holy shit I need a shower after this. Gimmick pulled off perfect—covers of *Killed by Death* tracks by new lo-lo-lo-fi geniuses. Years in the making, with bands that P. Trash has released—some of the best bands sludging around. Jeffrey Novak somehow made "I Hate Music" even more prehistoric. The Tyrades dominate "Pop Gun." Drugstop revitalizes "M.I.C." And then there's The Feelers, Carbonas, Black Time, The Heartattacks, Los Raw Gospels, Digger & the Pussycats, and more. Great comp. —Speedway Randy (P. Trash)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: KY DIY: LP

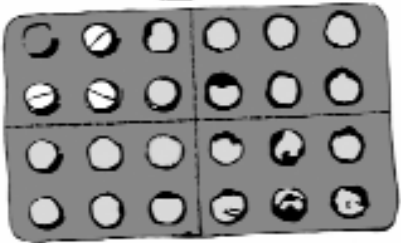
On a dare with myself, I tried to think of a "famous" Missouri punk band without having to resort to looking at the *Kill from the Heart* webpage. Lost that dare. The point, other than that I'm a dweeb, is that state is apparently woefully under-represented, for although the bands listed for that area are semi-famous (or in the case of White Pride, infamous) there are only three entries for that entire state. That's where this comp comes in. Sure, the bands here: Amxiety Attack, Alert! Alert!, The Creepy Aliens, Crap Corps, The Blackouts, The Skate-o-Masochists, When Good Robots Go

Bad, The Hamburglars, Dick Cheney's Dick and The Hospital, respectively, are not bands from the "classic" era of American punk/hardcore, but they are from Missouri, and make a mean racket in their own right. Although the emphasis here is heavy on the hardcore, each band here has enough individual personality not to become one big, boring blur. Best of all, it's a compilation that is true to what made so many early comps so crucial—it is a snapshot of a particular area at a particular time, rather than some lame-ass "sampler" of bands you'd never listen to, courtesy of some label you'd never buy anything from. If indie punk is something you can get behind, this is well worth seeking out. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cassette Kill)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Mad Fabricators Society Soundtrack, Volume Two: CD

Über hot rod, high performance '60s-inspired instrumental surf and greasy garage from the Mad Fabricators Society II DVD. Includes the Lords of Altamont, Bleed, Dynotones, Blue Demons, Mr. Badwrench, Los Creepers, and the Delusionaires. Not one of the twenty-six tracks is boring or a bummer. Absolutely compulsory for summer cruising. —Jessica T (Split 7)

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VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Tales from the Asphalt Dancefloor*: 12" EP

I remember in high school (late '80s) that if you wanted any advancement with a young lady, chances are you'd have to swallow Guns'n'Roses, Paula Abdul, Information Society—or, best case, if you were so lucky—The Cure, Marc Almond, Depeche Mode, or the Smiths. This comp. sounds like an updated version of the latter with more guitars: sorta-new wave, spooky, often drum-machined “I like Sisters of Mercy and Front 242” stuff. No surprise, I enjoyed the broke, tension-filled tracks (Destruction Unit, Digital Leather) over the robots of the post apocalypse with tons of effects pedals stuff (The Cutters, Sex For Cigarettes). Six songs, 12” vinyl EP picture disk. —Todd (Vodka Tonic)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

The Funhouse Comp Thing: CD

This comp features the efforts of The Primate 5, Armitage Shanks, The Cripples, The Hollow Points, The Mexican Blackbirds, Earaches, and others, meaning it's heavy on the trash rock and synth-driven punk stuff. Although a little more diversity in its thirty-two tracks would've been swell, what's here is top notch—energetic, loud, and often fucked up in all the right ways. If for no other reason, pick it up for the Steaming Wolf Penis track. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Funhouse)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Winnipeg Riot!: CD

Like most Americans, my knowledge of All Things Rock in Winnipeg starts with the Guess Who, middles with the Stretch Marks, and ends with Propagandi, with not much (actually, with nothing) in between. And, inasmuch as i'd like to co-opt this review to point out the fact that the Guess Who—especially their early work from the '60s—are a fairly underrated band in today's Rock Forefather Pecking Order, the more pertinent facts of the matter seem to indicate that, quite off American (and potentially even Canadian) radar screens, Winnipeg has, by all indications, served as a merrily festering pus lump of punk/rock/rock/punk carnage. If the liner notes can be believed (and why can't they?), Winnipeg is essentially Manitowoc or Kenosha on a Saturday night, but 24/7—beer, brawls, and punk, not necessarily in that order (actually, i take that back. *Necessarily* in that order). I assume this CD serves sort of the same purpose as balcony seats at a GG Allin show—I get an okay view of the situation, but am in no danger of getting anything yucky on my shirt—and, truth be told, it's pretty decent for the first seventy-five to eighty percent. Things start wobblin' off into unlistenability towards the end, but i can actually say that i think, with *Winnipeg Riot!*, civilization has turned the corner whereby i am actually somewhat interested in

listening to compilations again—something that i don't believe has been the case since about 1982. Go to Fargo, hang a right. Yep. BEST SONG: Hot Live Guys "Robbin' A Bank" BEST SONG TITLE: The Surfdelics "Flux Capacitor" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "Yes, it's *real blood*." —Rev. Nørh (Dionysus)

Varsity Drag:

For Crying out Loud: CD

The sticker on the cover told me that this is Ben Deily from the Lemonheads. Now, I like the Lemonheads (yes, the cool albums like *Hate Your Friends*, but I'd be lying if I said I don't kick myself every once in a while for giving away my *It's a Shame about Ray* tape, too). Varsity Drag, on the other hand, is the kind of stuff you probably listen to when you're well over fifty and want to feel like you listen to something edgier than lite jazz or adult contemporary, but, you know, with a tambourine. —Megan (Boss Tuneage)

VICTIMS: *Divide and Conquer*: CD

I had two chances to see this band live while they toured the states and I missed both of them. I wish I had the energy of my teen years. I was going to go out on three consecutive nights: a banner outing for me. But after seeing Tragedy on a Saturday, I could not recover. A Sunday and Monday show and going to work did not work to my benefit. I needed sleep and

that's what ended up happening. I hate to miss a touring band. I hate it even more when the band has come from another country. Even though I did not have personal knowledge of this band, they came well recommended. A lot of times, I like seeing a band live first before acquiring their recorded output. This was my game plan. Since my plan fell by the wayside, an alternative did come my way. By chance, a copy of their latest release sat waiting for me at HQ. I would at least get to experience this band one way or another. First off, the band residing in Sweden makes me think that nothing can go wrong from here on out. I am heavily biased with a love for bands from Sweden. Crust, metal, or pop punk, there are so many great bands. From first listen, I knew I was in for a treat and have to add another band to the already extensive shopping list of releases that I need to purchase. Straight forward songs that average at the minute and a half mark. I'm thinking a mixture of Wolfpack (or later Wolfbrigade) meets Tragedy but also adding everything I love in a band like Fucked Up. Fast hardcore that has their homegrown Scandinavian touch but with unique accents that keep things interesting. Quick shifts of Dis-style punk that at moments might feel brooding or bringing it back into the mid '80s. I'm really bummed that I missed them. -Donofthedeath (Havoc)

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VITAMIN X: *Rip It out*: 7" EP

Solid, driving hardcore with the occasional lyrical nod to something larger than the personal gripe. Nice pics of them jumping around and fans going apeshit. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

WASTED TIME: Self-titled: 7" EP

Another hardcore band that keeps the pace at a nice, thrashy clip, sounds good'n'pissed off, and checks out before they wear out their welcome. Gotta love that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Grave Mistake)

WEEGS, THE:

The Million Sounds of Black: CD

Herky-jerky punkwave stuff on this second album—lotsa structured skronk to keep the cynical dancing the night away and make their Bay area art-punk predecessors like Minimal Man and Snakefinger proud. By the by, the forty-plus minute bonus track sounds like an outtake of Pink Floyd's "Interstellar Overdrive." —Jimmy Alvarado (Hungry Eye)

WHISKEY & CO.:

Leaving the Nightlife: CD

I used to say bullshit to the idea that “tastes mature,” because it was usually some dickhead in a sweater vest trying to convince me that one day I’d convert over to the Republican party and realize how Rush (take your pick: the dude or the band) “kicks ass.” But, I have to admit, ten years ago, I probably wouldn’t have

given Whiskey & Co. much thought. They play stripped-down, old-time country, pretty much. But, in the past ten years, many bad things have befallen me. Many times, the music that I took solace in at one time just wasn't cutting it. Sometimes you have to whisper back to the world, not yell, to try to find your place in it and, man, Kim Helm's voice just does that. It's fiery, redemptive, and dripping sadness in much the same way as Patsy Cline's (but Kim really does sound like Natalie Merchant), with a group of musicians who sound like they could be playing for a young Merle Haggard (but have played in Asshole Parade). It's outlaw country punk in the best possible sense: tons of heart, artfully and achingly played, for the disposed and dispossessed. Excellent. —Todd (No Idea)

WHOREHOUSE OF REPRESENTA-

TIVES: *Discography 1993 – 1999: CD*
Having owned records by this Seattle crust punk band for over a decade, and having them sit unplayed in my 7" bins for nearly as long, I wasn't exactly ripping my shorts off in excitement when I got this one. It's quite possible that this was just sent to the wrong dude—the Profane people are probably crapping themselves over it. WOR played fast crust punk with female vocals ala Provoked, Disrespect, etc., with all the requisite thrash parts and A-B-A-B rhyme schemes.

Unfortunately for the WOR folks, crust is synonymous with hip hop to me—filtered through my ears, ninety-five percent of it sounds exactly the same. It's never been a genre that's excited me enough to really explore. That said, I'm sure fans of the band will be totally stoked to have all the records gathered together in one format. There's plenty of reproduced record covers, flyers, and lyrics included; only real thing missing is a discography listing, what songs appeared where. So that's about it—wasn't my bag at all, but definitely a great document for a band that was productive for a long time. —Keith Rosson (Inimical/Un-Yelliman)

YOUTH BRIGADE: *Songs from the Liza Minelli Songbook*: CD

It's been more than a decade, guys. Some of us rabid fans are getting a wee bit impatient for a new album and I, for one, would like to sing along with some new tuneage before I hafta do it from a rest home. —Jimmyv Alvarado (BYO)

ZEKE: Tour 7":7"

So, one of these songs is supposed to be a cover. I'm not sure which. Supposedly, it's the song "Kings and Queens" by Aerosmith... but I looked up the lyrics and they're totally different. At any rate, I haven't checked in with Zeke in a long, long, long time. I thought *Kicked in the Teeth* was the follow up to *Blood*.

Guts, and Pussy that the Dwarves should have recorded, and I fucking loved it. The follow up to that record was titled *Dirty Sanchez* which, at the time, was hilarious but the record itself was a let down. After that, I didn't bother with anything else. The first track, "Die When You Die," is the Zeke that I'm accustomed to. Fast, dirty, and a little fucked up. The other two are big, old badass '70s rockers with a little touch of stoner rock. I find myself putting on the rockers more than the "classic" Zeke lead-off track. I think I gave up on Zeke way, way, way too soon. If you're interested, this is supposed to be a tour-only deal, but I think you can find it on a few mail order websites. Oh, and Relapse... I'm sure you already noticed but you fucked up the inner labels. —Stevo (Relapse)

Here's the deal: every review Razorcake has ever done will be up on razorcake.org in the near future. There will be thousands that have never seen print. (Be patient. It's a lot of work.) Just use the search function. If you're about to ask the question, "Did you review that?" log on and check first. Thanks for reading.



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- **Boomchick**, 6405 Morrill Ave., Havelock, NE 68507
- **Boss Tuneage**, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2WB, UK
- **Brain Handle**, PO Box 10223, Pittsburgh, PA 15232
- **BSD**, 716-B Harris Ave., Austin, TX 78705
- **Bullets**, 2311 Wilson St. NE, MPLS, MN 55418
- **Burning Heart**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **Captain Oi**, c/o PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA
- **Cassette Kill**, 1219 Union St. #202, Kansas City, MO 64101
- **Chainsaw Safety**, PO Box 260318, Bellerose, NY 11426
- **Combat Rock**, PO Box 65, 11101 Rmk, Finland
- **Control Group**, c/o Sonic Boom Records, 3414 Fremont Ave. North, Seattle, WA 98103
- **Cooking Vinyl**, PO Box 246, Huntington, NY 11743
- **Crimes Against Humanity**, PO Box 1421, Eau Claire, WI 54703
- **Crusty**, PO Box 59, 1895 Commercial Dr., Vancouver, BC, Canada V5N 4A6
- **Delanuca**, 1590 NW 29th St., Miami, FL 33142
- **Delta Pop Music**, 663 S. Bernardo Ave. #113, Sunnyvale, CA 94087
- **Deranged**, 1166 Chaster Rd., Gibsons, BC, V0N 1V4, Canada
- **Die Slaughterhaus**, PO Box 160168, Atlanta, GA 30316
- **Ding Dong Ditch**, 7601 Tisdale #C, Austin, TX 78757
- **Dionysus**, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507
- **Dirtnap**, 2615 SE Clinton St., Portland, OR 97202
- **Discourage**, 1737 SE Morrison St., Portland, OR 97214
- **Don Giovanni**, PO Box 15482, Boston, MA 02215
- **Douche Master**, 156 Pearl St., Atlanta, GA 30316
- **Drag City**, PO Box 476867, Chicago, IL 60647
- **Empty**, PO Box 12301 Portland, OR 97212
- **Epitaph**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **Ernest Jennings**, 175 Luquer St. #4, Brooklyn, NY 11231
- **Even Worse**, Saenredamstraat 44-2, 1072 CH, Amsterdam, Holland
- **Fashionable Idiots**, PO Box 580131, MPLS, MN 55458
- **Fast Crowd**, 2721 Wightman St., SD, CA 92104
- **Fat Wreck Chords**, PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119
- **Firestarter**, 1219 Union Ave., Baltimore, MD 21211
- **Fistful of Records**, c/o Jos de Groot, Abstederdijk 190 A, 3582 BW Utrecht, Netherlands
- **FNS**, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130
- **Foam Cell**, 1334 Pembroke St., Victoria, BC Canada V8R 1V4
- **Funhouse**, 206 5th Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109
- **Gern Blandsten**, PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661
- **Goner**, 2152 Young Ave., Memphis, TN 38104
- **Grave Mistake**, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241
- **Grayscale**, 1150 Washington Blvd. #2, Oak Park, IL 60302
- **Grey Flight**, 16458 Bolsa Chica St. #409, Huntington Beach, CA 92649
- **Havoc**, PO Box 8585, MPLS, MN 55408
- **He Who Corrupts**, PO Box 4450, Chicago, IL 60680-4450
- **Headache**, PO Box 204, Midland Park, NJ 07432
- **Hellcat**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **Hopeless**, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409
- **Hungry Eye**, PO Box 20403, Tompkins Square Station, NY, NY 10009
- **Hydra Head**, PO Box 291430, LA, CA 90029
- **I Scream**, 7400 49th Ave., New Hope, MN 55428
- **In The Red**, PO Box 50777, LA, CA 90050
- **Incessant Drip**, 3510 SE Sherry Lane 7, Milwaukee, OR 97222
- **Inimical**, PO Box 2803, Seattle, WA 98111
- **Insurgence**, 2 Bloor St. W. Ste. 100-184, Toronto, ON Canada M4W 3E2
- **It's Alive**, 11411 Hewes St., Orange, CA 92869
- **Kangaroo**, Middenweg 13, 1098 AA, Amsterdam, Holland
- **Kill Rock Stars**, 120 NE State Ave. #418, Olympia, WA 98501
- **Kiss of Death**, PO Box 75550, Tampa, FL 33675
- **Last Shot**, PO Box 17063, Seattle, WA 98127
- **La-Ti-Da**, 2314 Richmond Rd., Victoria, BC, Canada V8R-4R8
- **Let's Pretend**, PO Box 2993, Carbondale, IL 62901
- **Lifeline**, PO Box 692, Midlothian, IL 60445
- **Little Deputy**, PO Box 7066, Austin, TX 78713
- **Criminal IQ**, 3540 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657
- **Lookatme Bumpole**, 130 Martin St., Covington, KY 41011
- **Lorelei**, PO Box 295, Santa Cruz, CA, 95062
- **Lovitt**, PO Box 100248, Arlington, VA 22210
- **Mad Butcher**, Kurze Geismarstr.6, 37073 Goettingen, Germany
- **Magic Bullet**, 17 Argyle Hills Dr., Fredericksburg, VA 22405
- **Matador**, 625 Broadway, NY, NY 10012
- **Misfits**, PO Box 2043, Radio City Station, NY, NY 10101
- **Moodkiller**, PO Box 11561, Olympia, WA 98508
- **Mortville**, PO Box 4263, Austin, TX 78765
- **Neckers**, 3836 14th St. N.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2K 1J4, Canada
- **Neins**, 6319 NE 32nd Pl., Portland, OR 97211
- **No Front Teeth**, PO Box 27070, London N2 9ZP, UK
- **No Fun**, PO Box 8154, Ann Arbor, MI 48107
- **No Idea**, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604
- **Not Bad**, PO Box 371292, Denver, CO 80237
- **On On Switch**, PO Box 641122, SF, CA 94164
- **P. Trash**, c/o Peter Eichhorn, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, Germany
- **Shattered**, c/o Alix & Jay, 1352 Faxon Ave., Memphis, TN 38104
- **Plan-It-X South**, 720 Pickens Ave., Pensacola, FL 32503
- **Plastic Idol**, c/o Mario Solis, 410 Bell Ave. Apt. 25, Sacramento, CA 95838
- **Plastic**, PO Box 1385, NY, NY 10156
- **Poison City**, PO Box 409 Northcote, Vic, Australia 3070
- **Pravda**, PO Box 268043, Chicago, IL 60626
- **Pretty Activity**, 177 W. 26th St. #600, NY, NY 10001
- **Psychobilly US**, c/o Hairball8, PO Box 681674, San Antonio, TX 78268-1674
- **Puke'n'vomit**, PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834
- **Punkcore**, PO Box 916, Middle Island, NY 11953
- **Radio**, PO Box 1452, Sonoma, CA 95476
- **Recess**, PO Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733-1666
- **Red Scare**, PO Box 22306, SF, CA 94122
- **Resistors**, 1131 E. Acacia Ave., Glendale, CA 91205
- **Revelation**, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232
- **Rich Bitch**, PO Box 1402, Tempe, AZ 85280
- **Rock Bottom**, 25510 East Comfort Dr., Forest Lake, MN 55025
- **Rodent Popsicle**, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134
- **Rowdy Farrago**, c/o Flat 4, 101 Park Rd., Peterborough Cambs PE1 2TR UK
- **Sailor's Grave**, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612
- **Salinas**, PO Box 20996, Ferndale, MI 48220
- **Serious Business**, 538 Johnson Ave. Ste. 205, Brooklyn, NY 11237
- **Shit Sandwich**, 1400 S Elmwood, Berwyn, IL 60402
- **Shite 'N' Onions**, PO Box 7367, MPLS, MN 55407
- **So Intense**, 1207 E. Flora St., Tampa, FL 33604
- **SOS**, PO Box 3017 Corona, CA 92878
- **Southkore**, 2814 S. Spaulding, Chicago, IL 60623
- **Spiral**, PO Box 75223, Seattle, WA 98175
- **Split 7**, 12405 Venice Blvd. #265, LA, CA 90066
- **Spook City**, PO Box 34891, Philadelphia, PA 19101
- **Stuporhero**, PO Box 17734, Seattle, WA 98127
- **Sub Pop**, PO Box 20367, Seattle, WA 98102
- **Subterranean**, PO Box 2530, Berkeley, CA 94702
- **Suburban Home**, PO Box 40757, Denver, CO 80204
- **Swami**, PO Box 620428, SD, CA 92162
- **Tag Team**, 115 N. Kenmore Ste. #3, LA, CA 90004
- **Templecombe**, PO Box 602, Bayside, NY 11706
- **Terminal City**, 2141 Continental Ave., Tallahassee, FL 32304
- **Therman Merman**, 1015 Potter St., Bellingham, WA 98229
- **Third Party**, 21 Nancy Lane, Amherst, NY 14228
- **This Could Work**, 720 2nd St. NE, Minot, ND 58703
- **TKO**, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646
- **Trigger-on-the-dutendoo**, 308A Bowen St., Oshkosh, WI 54901
- **Un-Yelliman**, PO Box 4171, Seattle, WA 98194-0171
- **Velvet Wrinkle Wreckerds**, Ste. A 1702 East Susquehanna St., Allentown, PA 18103
- **Vodka Tonic**, PO Box 1975, Tempe, AZ 85280-1975
- **Volcom**, 1740 Monrovia Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627
- **Wallride**, 4401 Ethel Ave., Hampstead, MD 21074
- **Wee Rock**, PO Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801
- **Wicked Singles**, 933 Metropolitan Ave. #2L, Brooklyn, NY 11211
- **Wolverine**, Rochusstr. 48, 40479 Dusseldorf, Germany

Send all zines for review to Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. Please include a contact address, the number of pages, the price, and whether or not you accept trades.



(EXPLANATION OF SMURFS BY A CHRISTIAN GROUP.)

"BLUE DEMONS THAT TEACH LITTLE KIDS TO CALL UPON (A) GOAT IN TIMES OF EXTREME TROUBLE."

-YOU IDIOT #4

BLACK VELVET #47, \$7, 8" x 11 1/2", 40 pgs.

Black Velvet is a zine from the U.K. Upon first look, the reader will notice the glossy cover and pages, as well as extensive articles on the acts covered. This issue features: The Starting Line, Bowling For Soup, Rise Against, Bleed The Dream, Zebrahead, and lots more. There are also a ton of reviews (singles, albums, live, zines, etc.) and the writing is all fairly well done. There's a good mix of black and white and color photos that complement the solid layout. Compared to many zines, there were very few ads, which is nice when reading an article. I only had two complaints. One is that the artists covered just weren't up my alley and their taste in music seemed a little juvenile and bland, the other being that the price is kind of steep, but I guess it costs more to send stuff across the pond. If the type of stuff covered sounds like your cup of tea, then by all means check this rag out because it's definitely got some good style. -Kurt Morris (Black Velvet, 336 Birchfield Rd., Webbeath Redditch, Worcs., B974NG, England)

BUTTON MASHER #1 and #2, email for price, interesting trades considered, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 24 pgs.

Set up like an episodic book, it leaves me wondering if it's a perzine or "a work of fiction closely related to the author's life." And the difference, although subtle, could be the key to this getting much better. As it stands, *Button Masher* is fine. It's about a dude who doesn't like much, scrapes by in college, is already nostalgic for years past, and is working his way through getting a punk band together that he likes. Fair enough. It's a fast read. If it's a perzine: it assumes too much. In episode one, the dude moves back home. He doesn't say how far home is or give much indication beyond which hatred is less: hatred of his parents or his roommate who pissed in the closet. (When he leaves suddenly, there's oddly no talk whatsoever about rent.) Also, as a perzine, when he gets to messing around with a girl, the curtains close and the reader is left up to their imaginations.

Boo. I'm no perv, but I read so people can tell me stories, not to tell me that they're not going to tell me something. (I'd read newspapers if I wanted that.) So, option number two is "work of fiction," and I hope this is the direction that the author, Joe, goes in, because the amateur psychologist in me sees a passive-aggressive glimmer of hope in the protagonist. And Joe could show, intimately, how a character could be so passionate, smartly critical, and emotionally dumb simultaneously, but steer him into new waters and I could start rooting for him. Right now, I'm mostly wincing and thinking, "Dude, uh, that girl's about to fuck you over, you're being selfish by lack of communication, and you're not handling this very well." There's hope and I'll definitely pick up number three. -Todd (Joe Evans, JowWSTK@yahoo.com)

DRUNKEN MASTER #2, \$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", color cover, photocopied, 62 pgs.

People who have their shit together impress me. People who have their shit together, work full-time jobs, have a young child who they cherish, and continue putting out kick-ass zines that they'll never see any financial returns on, well, that's humbling. In the land of instant gratification and blogs, you gotta take pause and realize that certain things don't get outdated. At the top of that list: quality. All controlled by the deft, kung-fu hand of Kiyoshi, *Drunken Master* is part Frank Miller meets manga comics, part essay, part "Hey, this is really cool, a bar with twelve pinball machines in the back." And it's all distilled and controlled and personalized, so it doesn't come across disjointed or haphazard when Kiyoshi interviews a fetish actress who gets food tossed at her, and two pages later, it's a picture of and homage to his mother's passing. *DM* is an open invite into a friendly, thoughtful, wonderfully drawn world. -Todd (no address listed)

DWELLING PORTABLY, May 2006, \$1, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 20 pgs. This is somewhat of a how-to guide for alternative lifestyles. There are

tips/advice for how to do all sorts of stuff, ranging from car maintenance, living like a nomad, and setting up solar panels. It can be a bit much to all take in, but if you're really into stuff like this, this is probably a good resource for you. Furthermore, there's a distro of similar zines, so if you can't find what you need here, you can still find it out somewhere else. If any of this is the least bit interesting to you, track this down. -Joe Evans III (Bert, PO Box 190-L, Philomath, OR 973370-0190)

EAVES OF ASS #4,

\$2 or trade, 4 1/4" x 7", copied, 28 pgs. Feel a bit weird about reviewing this one, as Craven's stayed at my house before, and we've gotten shitfaced and done zine readings together. I've seen the mofo in some uncompromising positions, but for the sake of journalistic integrity I'll just stick to what's being presented in *EOA* #4. So this is the fourth issue of the zine, subtitled "Fort Venom Stories." Called thusly because it's a mildly fictional and loosely structured story revolving around the tenants of an apartment building titled Fort Venom (due to the ridiculous amount of King Cobra malt liquor consumed there), I'm sure he'll consider this a burn, but when he's on (and despite the typographical errors in this issue, he's most assuredly on), Craven's reminiscent of Aaron Cometbus at his best. And not in the sense that he's copying anything, but that they're both writers who are able to totally immerse the reader in their respective worlds; in Craven's case it's a world filled to the brim with fucked and damaged characters desperately searching for something, intangible or not. Nice thing is that Craven's writing is so goddamn articulate and thoughtful—he tackles everything from class issues to a nameless kind of restlessness and futility with the same eloquence. I don't really want to give a lot of this thing away, but it's a coherent and chronological story about the rise and demise of an apartment building taken over by a bunch of Louisville punks—ceaseless drinking, random destruction, and some pretty heartfelt soul-searching are all evident in this

one. Believe I've read every issue of this zine, and #4 is the most rock-solid, passionate and consistent. If you're gonna check out an issue, make it this one. -Keith Rosson (Craven Rock, PO Box 20692, Seattle, WA 98102)

FIFTH GRADE, 3 stamps or trade, 4.25" x 5.5", copied, 44 pgs.

Brilliant idea. Ben, the creator of this little memoir, had all of his shit burn up in his apartment a long time ago. Lost all of his possessions. When going through a box at his mom's house, he found his fifth grade yearbook, one of the very few remaining relics of his childhood. So what he's done is drawn a bunch of very simple line portraits of a bunch of the kids from that yearbook, many of them interspersed with touching or funny stories about the people. It's a quick read, but absolutely charming as hell from the first page to the last. It's definitely one of those smack-the-forehead ideas I wish I'd thought of first. Really nice work. -Keith Rosson (Love Bunni Press c/o Ben Frazier, 2622 Princeton Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118)

GAINES STREET SAINTS

#3, \$? 8 1/2" x 7", copied, 26 pgs. A very respectable issue of *Gaines Street Saints* that covers Tallahassee, Florida bands (Cheap Thrills, County Hell, Call For Fire, Lucky Scars), a few reviews, a bizarre column that ends with a skin saying, "Just buy me a beer and fuck off!" and a myriad of pictures. The questions with each interview seemed to be fairly similar; it would've been nice to see a little more diversity, but I definitely respect zines that want to support their local scene and interview the local bands. The layout is pretty simple but good enough and definitely better than anything I've ever done in my own zines. If you're interested in what's going on down in Tallahassee or want to read a decent skinhead zine, check this out. -Kurt Morris (Gaines Street Saints, PO Box 3411, Tallahassee, FL 32315-3411)

GENETIC DISORDER #18, \$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", color cover, offset, 62 pgs.

With time and dedication, if one works hard enough, one becomes what they love. And *Genetic Disorder* has become just that. What Larry Genetic finds impressive in others—like Iggy Scam actually going out in the world and practicing what he's writing about—Larry does himself. Larry's not only funny, he's smart and he's a dirtbag lifer, and that makes him a strong ally for anyone reading this sentence. In this issue: Larry gets a personal copy of San Diego's mayor's resignation on official letterhead. The document actually reads at the bottom "cc: City Councilmembers, City Manager, Larry Genetic Disorder." Impressive. Larry's also impressed by John Reis—the former guiding light behind Rocket From The Crypt and now the pirate ship captain of The Sultans—because John starts out with a fully formed concept, and, step by step, fills that concept in so it's cohe-

—Brian Mosher (published by Butcher Shop Press, Rose of Sharon Press, and Temple of Man)

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

#275, \$4/5, 8 1/2" x 11", printed, 144 pgs.

By the time I got this for review, I'd already bought it probably a month earlier, so that pretty much assures you I already like this. Besides, this is *MRR*: if you're into punk you either already know what to expect, or will find out soon enough. There's the columns, reviews, scene reports, and letters from fans saying, "I am really, really punk rock, and this is why...." Highlights this issue include part one of a special on NYC punk space ABC No Rio, as well as a Hard Skin tour diary (*however*, there is no mention of me taking a boot to the face at one of the Philly shows, which was clearly a major part of the night). —Joe Evans III (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760)

this; one that was a single page folded up, and another that was five other issues all put together. Personal style, with topics ranging from tattoos, tips for going on tour, and food. If you're interested, your best bet's to write (there wasn't anything specified, but I'd say include a buck or two, or some stamps just to be polite), and wait for a bunch of cool surprises to come in the mail. —Joe Evans III (530 S. Clinton #8, Iowa City, IA 52240)

POOR AND FORGOTTEN, #23

& 24, \$1/stamps/trade, 4 1/4" x 2 1/2", copied, 1 pg/folded.

Total DIY effort from Massachusetts. Issue #23 is mostly an interview with the Papercut Zine Library, and #24 is mostly about tattoos, smoking, and being in jail. I couldn't relate to the second one too well, but I do like zines, so I enjoyed the Papercut issue a lot. Both have other miscellaneous stuff like comics and punk word searches. —Joe Evans III (Matt Johnson, PO Box 59, Linwood, MA 01525)

ROCKIT! #1, \$2, 4" x 5", photocopied, 32 pgs.

This was sent to *Razorcake* as part of a thank you letter for me deciding not to fold the zine when I was having a rough time dealing with a broken leg. And *Rockit!* reads like a thank-you letter to Emily's town of Carbondale, Illinois and a thank you letter to her friends. While it's rough (the reader gets thrust into pre-existing situations, folks aren't introduced, and it's sort of assumed you're a bit familiar with the zine's surroundings), Emily's tenderness and plain niceness make this a good read. It's also issue #1, a good place to start. A love of *Cometbus*, Jawbreaker, and crushes is much better than a love of frat keggers, Staind, and unprotected sex with strangers. I'm hoping that Emily uses those influences, ingests them, and starts looking towards another strong voice: her own. —Todd (No address)

SATAN'S FROSTBITE #1

\$4, 8 1/2" x 11", copied, 4 pgs. Four dollars for four pages of con-

"IF I WANTED TO BE CAUSTIC, I'D SAY IT'S THE RAZORCAKE OF THE VEGAN BULLETBELT SCENE. BUT THEN I'D HAVE TO SAY RAZORCAKE IS JUST A TOILET MAG FOR DRUNKS, AND NEITHER ONE'D BE FAIR."

SLUG & LETTUCE #86

sive. And that's exactly what #18 feels like: personal vision nailed down tight. Larry loves San Diego enough to question its politicians directly while asking them questions they've never been asked, visit and write about its sewage treatment plant, interview its bands, and it's all tied together tightly, expertly, so that his zine is pretty much a present to be unwrapped every time it comes in the mail. —Todd (PO Box 15237, San Diego, CA 92175)

HARVEY KEITEL, HARVEY KEITEL, HARVEY KEITEL, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", offset/ professionally bound, 96 pgs.

This is a for-real book of real poetry by real poets, not just a zine thrown together by some kids. It's full of a lot of anti-war sentiment, and tons of social commentary of a generally liberal tilt. For the most part, it's all very well done, in an academic sort of way—just the kind of stuff your college English professor would have loved for you to turn in. I found it mostly dry and boring. Three different poets contributed: John Dorsey, S. A. Griffin and Scott Wannberg. But there's little if any real difference in the stylistic approaches they take or the material they cover. The publishers provide no purchase price and no address or contact information.

NONSENSICAL WRITINGS OF AN ANGRY YOUNG NERD #5, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 14 pgs.

The title's a little confusing, since the zine makes sense and the writer doesn't seem all that angry. The meat and potatoes of this issue is a great interview with Mike Wiebe of the Riverboat Gamblers. The issue starts off with "don't believe the hype" until Nerd actually listens and sees the Gamblers and gets converted. The cool thing is that the interview is great. They get into the appropriation of the Big Boys logo into the Gambler's logo (with Tim Kerr's blessing), the ins and outs (mostly outs, mostly warfare on the losing side) of playing the Warped Tour, and Mike still feeling bad that he knocked out bassist, Pat's teeth out by accident while playing in San Francisco. I'm a sucker for a good interview and when any zine can suck me into one, well, that's all the recommendation I need. Good stuff. PS: To all the zinesters out there, write your goddamned postal address in the zine. That's how people you don't know can get it through the mail. —Todd (angryyoungnerd@hotmail.com)

NOSE KNOWS, THE, \$2, 5 1/2" x 4 1/4", copied, various page lengths Initially, I was a little confused with the set up, as I got two "issues" of

PUDD'NHEAD #2, \$2 ppd, 8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 56 pgs.

Hand drawn and written, this is a calendar for the period of May 1, 2006–May 1, 2007. There is a separate drawing for each day, usually focused on that day's "Word of the Day." The author also supplies definitions and examples of usage for each day's word. The "Word of the Day" range from fairly ordinary (strident—"Characterized by brutal raging discordant sound, loud and obtrusive," "If it ain't strident, I ain't buyin' it.") to medical terminology (rheum—"the liquid that drips out of your eyes and nose when, say, you get pepper sprayed," "After Clint and I got pepper-sprayed, we couldn't see anything and we had rheum running all over our faces. So we went to the Wienery and ate a badass meal.") to the just plain obscure (prolix—"way too long and drawn-out, using too many words," "from a production standpoint, this is a prolix project I have going here."). Being forced to read the whole thing at once, I'd have to say that it's definitely prolix from a consumer standpoint, as well. Probably easier to take if you read it one day at a time, as was intended, but still not exactly thrilling or entertaining. —Brian Mosher (Puddin'head, wilk0214@umn.edu)

tent? Are you serious? Beyond that, it's frustrating because it's all just a story, told in thirteen parts and for that they want four bucks? I probably wouldn't even give this a good review if it was free. The fact that they want four bucks for it just makes it the nail in the coffin. —Kurt Morris (Whizzbanger Productions, PO Box 5591, Portland, OR 97228)

SKYSCRAPER, Spring 2006, \$5, 8 1/2" x 11", printed, 127 pgs.

From the looks of it, you would think this is more of an indie rock magazine, but I was surprised. There's features on Parts & Labor (who are great), but also John Wilkes Boozie, Das Oath, and the Clorox Girls amongst others. Pretty much reviews and band features/interviews, but at least it's really thorough, and there's a good amount of variety. —Joe Evans III (www.skyscrapermagazine.com)

SLUG & LETTUCE #86

free in person or \$1 ppd., 11" x 15", newsprint, 20 pgs. Dude, it's *Slug & Lettuce*. What am I supposed to say? If I wanted to be caustic, I'd say it's the *Razorcake* of the vegan bulletbelt scene. But then I'd have to say *Razorcake* is just a toilet mag for drunks, and neither one'd be fair. So with *S & L*, you know it and you dig it or you know it and you

don't. It's still a huge tabloid-sized newsprint zine, it's still chock-full of six- or seven-point type, still loaded with tons of resources, contact info, reviews, photos, ads, and columns, all with a heavy thrash/crust/activist slant. It still gives me that good feeling whenever I see it—Chris's tirelessness and stamina is definitely something to be admired, and it's rad to read columns by people who are fully aware of how ugly the world is and still manage to remain somewhat hopeful and active. If you haven't read the thing yet, for fuck's sake send Chris Boarts a dollar and a nice letter; while they're not covering the exact same scenes, there's more cross-pollination between *S & L* and *Heartattack* than with any of the other bigger zines, and with *Heartattack* recently folding, the resources and information *S & L* provides will wind up being more valuable than ever. —Keith Rosson (Slug & Lettuce, PO Box 26632, Richmond, VA 23261-6632)

SWAMP TUNA #4, free, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 8 pgs. If I told you that the cover of *Swamp Tuna* had a man's face emerging from the lips of a vagina with his hands on both sides as though he's emerging from out of the woman, that should give you a good idea of what this short zine is like. Inside are details on how to make a male sex toy, an interview with Mr.

Detroit 2006 (which I think is a joke), up-skirt photos, and other bullshit. With such a small amount of content (eight pages total) and most of it seemingly of the smutty variety, can't say that there's a lot here that interested me. —Kurt Morris (myspace.com/swamptuna)

TRUST, Feb./Mar. 06, 2.5 euros, 8 1/2" x 12", printed, 64 pgs. I'll start by saying this: *Trust* is pretty much entirely in German. I think. After four years of Spanish class, and two college semesters of French, I can't speak or read a word of either, so I think you know where I'm going with this. To the best of my ability, this is a pretty comprehensive magazine about everything that's going on in Europe, and within punk rock in general. I'll be honest, I really made no effort to figure out what the sex article was about. —Joe Evans III (Dolf Hermannstader, Postfach 11 07 62, Bremen, Germany)

UNFURNISHED ROOMS (TO DIE IN), \$2.50, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", offset, 56 pgs. Here's another outstanding collection of poetry and prose from B. Alan Ellis. The material is personal, but he presents it in a way that is universally understandable and relatable. Most of the poems deal with failed relationships, and the author is completely aware of his own responsibility for these fail-

ures. He's not an easy guy to get along with, apparently, but most artists aren't. Reading this you get a sense of what Mr. Ellis is really like, and it's not a pretty picture. He drinks too much, snorts cocaine, can't keep a job, his apartment's a mess... and it's not like he's proud of this stuff. It's just the way it is. This is a good read. —Brian Mosher (Unfurnished Rooms c/o House of Vlad Press, Gainesville, FL, house-ofvlad@hotmail.com)

WONKAVISION #31, \$3, 8 1/2" x 11", printed, 98 pgs. Yeah, I'm aware that punk has been a "household" name for quite some time now, but it still strikes me as weird when I see full size, glossy music magazines like this that don't have some jerky rock star on the cover. It's not a bad thing; it's just strange to me. Anyway, there isn't anything like "super obscure best thrash bands from Antarctica round up," but there's still some cool stuff, like music going from Ted Leo to Saul Williams, articles on bands going back and forth over the U.S./Canada border, mix tapes, and Clear Channel (The best part of which is that it's actually a fair, well thought out piece, and not just "WE HATE CLEAR CHANNEL. WHY? BECAUSE, UM, IT'S LIKE, YOU KNOW, BAD. OR SOMETHING"). I don't know who Aiden are, but apparently they're terrible (judging by the full page ad they

have) enough to warrant having their CD smashed, dipped into chocolate, and eaten, at least according to a piece here that was pretty funny. —Joe Evans III (PO Box 63680, Philadelphia, PA, www.wonkavision.com)

YOU IDIOT #4, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 28 pgs. This is awesome and fuckin' funny. Penning a perennial favorite zine of mine, Nate Gangelhoff has sharpened his satire's blade like a scythe going through claymation versions of Bible tales, all with a critical eye. This issue of *You Idiot* seems easy enough: make fun of Christians by bringing up how they get bent out of shape about the devil. But what makes *YI* truly special is realizing that America has gone so far right that wacko Christians are now attacking run-of-the-mill Christians. It's no longer Pat Robertson against Jello Biafra. It's Christians against Christian Rock. It's Christians against My Little Pony (any and all unicorns are off limits, too), Pokemon, the Smurfs ("blue demons that teach little kids 'to call upon (a) goat in times of extreme trouble'"), and Stryper. So, if you like laughing, want to get the inside Christian poop about why the Harry Potter books straight-rail kids to hell, or haven't read a good zine in awhile, here's the salve that heals. —Todd (Nate Gangelhoff, PO Box 8995, Minneapolis, MN 55408)



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Cocksparrer:

What You See Is What You Get: DVD

Cocksparrer is an anomaly in the rock world. Everything about their music—well crafted pop bombs slathered with enough punk to give 'em an edge, delivered by a top-notch band with a monster of a singer—screams out for them to be international superstars living high on the hog next door to Keith Richards on some remote island, yet they have remained a bit of a cult act in terms of mainstream success. While there is no doubting they have had a respectable career and their influence on a vast number of bands has been huge, it is maddening that one doesn't hear "Because You're Young," "Teenage Heart" or the perennial crowd pleaser "Sunday Stripper" blasting from a million stereos at any given minute. Ah, well, fuck the punters who'd rather blather on about the latest corporate puppet to win *American Idol* than pay attention to something with a longer shelf life than one television season. Those of us with half a wit know Cocksparrer have delivered the goods with surprising consistency over the course of three decades. That said, this DVD is a veritable smorgasbord of eye candy for the discerning 'Sparrr fan. On the two discs contained herein, one will find a full live set from 2003's Morecambe Holidays in the Sun festival, footage from their 2000 trek through the U.S., a movie detailing the band's history, video clips from as far back as 1977, lyrics for all four of their studio albums, a guitar tutorial, even more live footage and a video collection of some "Sunday Strippers" who have graced the stage. As expected, everything here, from the performance to the packaging, is top-notch. Dunno if they're planning on ever releasing another full-length studio record—in fact, it appears they're looking to finally call it a day—but if they don't, this is a great way to go out. —Jimmy Alvarado (TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646)

Doomed Messiah: Beholden 2 None: DVD

I took a lot of LSD while I was in high school. Actually, I liked to be fucked up a lot back then. This video magazine would have been great to have in those times while my friends and I tripped out on anything visual. This is the brain-child of artist/ videographer/ graphic designer

Tom Denny. Right from the start you are baraged with a ton of imagery and color that would be amplified with a good hallucinogenic. Aside from the graphics presented, this is a music based compilation. Featured are videos of Weedeater, Buried Sea, Buzzoven, Lair of the Minotaur, I Klatus, Starchild, King Fire Goat, Debris Inc., and closing with a vintage clip from Anal Cunt. If you like a multi media experience mixed with mostly heavy sludgcore bands added with some adult-themed animation thrown in for good measure, this might be of interest to you. As an added bonus, two short films are included. —Donofthedeath (Doomed Messiah, c/o Cyphlon Studio, 8914 E. Fairview Ave., San Gabriel, CA 91775, www.doomedmessiah.com)

Hirax: Thrash Til Death:

Live in Concert: DVD

"This is underground metal, not any of that mainstream bullshit!" yells Katon Depena in between songs at this show, filmed at the Minneapolis Mayhem II festival in 2005. In case you didn't know, Hirax has been blasting out full-speed-ahead heavy metal since the '80s. They've done records for labels as big as Metal Blade, and as punk as Six Weeks. This concert showcases the band, maybe not in their best shape, but certainly in their purest form. These dudes still thrash pretty hard for a bunch of old guys, and it's hard not to find Katon Depena's over-enthusiastic thanks between every song at least a little bit endearing. Production-wise, the people who put this DVD together did the best with what they had to work with, which is a three-camera recording with pretty rotten sound quality. There's cool graphics and they really worked hard on it. If you're a Hirax fan you'll totally want this, otherwise you'll probably live without it. —Ben Snakepit (<http://www.blackdevilrecords.com>)

Refused: Are Fucking Dead: DVD

As this point in time, Refused seem like more and more a myth than a group of individuals who used to be in some band, you know? And it's similar to religion—most people who've heard them are either naysayers, rolling their eyes and wondering what the big deal is, or they've got the band's freakin cover art tattooed on their ass-cheeks or something. Somewhere in the middle



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(though it's pretty rare, seems like) are people like me who own a few of their records and are kind of "eh" about 'em, who think there are moments where they really hit the mark (I still think just about every band, within either the screamo scene or the dick-shrinkingly shitty "nu-metal" field could learn a thing or two from a song like "New Noise"), and also moments where you realize you're really glad that Rage Against The Machine broke up, too. That said, I was totally prepared to pan this—if it served as nothing more than another hot air machine that served only to elevate a disbanded group that quite possibly really wasn't that incredible to begin with. But after watching the DVD, I've come to a few conclusions: a) They actually were a pretty innovative band for their time—the stuff they're playing isn't easy to do, by any means, and probably even harder to actually write. b) I actually found myself eventually admiring the band's candor and honesty.

The film was compiled, assembled, and edited by one of the band members, and features interviews from everyone in the band and people who toured with them. There's plenty of live show footage—huge arena shows to the last basement they ever played in before the cops shut it down. It's all in Swedish (with subtitles), the production values and editing are absolutely top notch, and it avoids that blank-eyed hero worship I seem to run across every time I talk to someone who really likes the band. That was one of my big worries about the film: I'd just recently watched the Shane McGowan documentary, *If I Should Fall from Grace*, and found it to be a poorly recorded, edited, and conceived piece of claptrap. Unlike that film, *Refused: Are Fucking Dead* provides actual information about the band—how they started, what their initial shows, ideas, and hopes were like, and the eventual crash and burn after seven years of playing together.

This film's definitely one of those things that people are either going to be interested in or not, regardless of what some dickhead writing for *Razorcake* says. But I will also say that as someone who wasn't really shit-fire enamored with the band, the production values, the strength of the interviews with Refused and people who knew them all, and the intensity of the live performances all made me sure that I wasn't bored for a second either. If you're even a distant fan of the band, this one'll probably floor you. —Keith Rosson (Epitaph/Burning Heart, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

Smut Peddlers: Live at DiPiazas: DVD
I find it hard to find music DVDs that cater to the music I like. It's a shame because I'm a bit of a DVD junkie. I guess "excited" is a word you could use when I heard that one of my favorite bands, Smut Peddlers, would be putting out a live vid. TKO did a great job with this. The packaging is great, as is the second disc with the CD version of the show. Nice touch. Now on to the meat. If you know Smut Peddlers, you know what to expect. Straight up, no bullshit punk rock that'll kick your doors in and key your car on the way out. The set is a tight collection of Peddlers' faves spanning pretty much all of their releases. Personal highlights include

"Yo-Yo," "Repeat Offender," "Hoosegow" (of course), "Fuck You... That's Why." Damn, it's all good. The sound and video also rule. The only thing that was a little lackluster was the commentary. There were many instances where they just stopped talking and watched the video. It's a small gripe, but if you're gonna do a commentary, then do it. Still, it's an amazing release that will have to keep me content until I can find away to get the Peddlers up to Canada. —Ty Stranglehold (TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505 Huntington Beach, CA 92646 USA)

Space Cretins: Rocket Roll: DVD-R
Pretty cool, pro-looking DVD-R from this Seattle band. I am sure they get compared to Dickies meets Ramones a lot, but to my ears the sound is more refined. To be perfectly honest, the first thing that comes to mind is Zowie Fenderblast from Lee Harvey Oswald Band fronting the Groovie Ghoulies. Really cool, glammy vocals over hard-charging poppy punk, all at warp speed. To make myself clear, that is one hell of a combination and I am digging it! This DVD is a collection of well done rock video-style videos, complete with lip synching and intercut footage. The songs are great and the performances are high energy. Also includes bonus footage with skits and more. Good stuff. A very well done self-released video. —Mike Frame (Killing Pig, 322 N. 74th St., Seattle, WA 98103)

Space Cretins: Rocket Roll: DVD
I liked the CD when I reviewed it a while back. I don't like the DVD. Cheeseball videos that make me rethink the songs that I liked before. Bad video effects, bad synching... Just bad. —Ty Stranglehold (Killing Pig, 322 N. 74th St., Seattle, WA 98103)

Willowz: See in Squares: DVD
I don't know exactly what it is, but there is some odor attached to the case of this DVD that's really fucking up my sinuses. The videos are cool, though. What you get is a wide variety of different approaches to the art of the music video because The Willowz have hooked up with a wide variety of filmmakers. There are a total of twenty-six videos, plus a bit of live footage filmed by the band themselves. The videos are creative and, for the most part, quite interesting. My favorites are the ones utilizing a kind of stop-action filming, in which the three members of the band must have spent hours jumping up and down while playing their instruments—and an animated one in which lead singer Richie James Follin becomes separated from his legs, and has to try to catch them again. One thing is for sure—not one of these videos is like another. If you're not familiar with The Willowz, their sound is somewhere on the indie pop side of the garage with smart lyrics. As long as the boxes don't all smell like this one, it's worth a look. —Brian Mosher (Screaming Peach, PO Box 291746, LA, CA 90029, www.screamingpeach.com)



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